00068307

NOT TO BE ISSUED OUT
WITHOUT PERMISSION.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

PANTHEISM

VOL. I.

GENERAL SKETCH

OF THE

B 2900

HISTORY OF PANTHEISM

IN TWO VOLUMES

6E307

VOL. I.

From the EARLIEST TIMES to the AGE OF SPINOZA

BY

C. E. PLUMPTRE

F. a. 36 I

'And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweep
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze
At once the soul of each and God of all?'—COLERIDGE

LONDON

TRÜBNER AND CO., LUDGATE HILL

(*All rights reserved*)

147
P'u Gan
68307

NOTICE

THE first volume of the following work appeared anonymously in the early part of 1878; the second, towards the close of 1879; both under circumstances which render their present Re-issue with the Author's name, by the firm of Messrs. Trübner & Co., almost equivalent to a first publication.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER 1

BOOK THE FIRST.

ORIENTAL PANTHÈISM.

CHAPTER

I. THE VEDAS. 29

II. BRAHMINISM 53

III. DIGRESSION ON VARIOUS HINDU PHILOSOPHIES WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SCHISM OF BUDDHA 84

IV. THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY. 102

V. THE BHAGAVAD-GITA 110

BOOK THE SECOND.

GREEK PANTHEISM.

I. THE IONIAN SCHOOL 125

II. PYTHAGORAS. 161

III. THE ELEATICS 186

IV. THE NEO-PLATONISTS 220

BOOK THE THIRD.

MODERN PANTHEISM.

CHAPTER PAGE

I. DIGRESSION ON THE PAGANISATION OF CHRISTIANITY, AND CONSEQUENT DECAY OF PANTHEISM . . . 259

II. DIGRESSION *continued*—RISE OF SCHOLASTICISM . . 285

III. SERVETUS 313

IV. GIORDANO BRUNO 348

V. LUCILIO VANINI 367

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

For I have learned
To look on Nature ; not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.—WORDSWORTH

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

IT is possible there may be some objections raised as to the title of this work. It may be said, and with some justice, that under the general name of Pantheism I have classed together religions widely differing from each other, in each of which religions there would be found but an occasional disciple admitting of there being any similarity between his religion and the religion of Pantheism. It may be said I have erred in representing the first crude speculations of Thales and Anaximenes as crude commencements of Pantheism; that they would have been more fitly entitled the first beginnings of philosophy. And still further, it may be objected that the word Pantheism, or abstract worship of Nature, must surely be a misnomer for religions which are pervaded with personifications of gods and incarnations of deities, as are the majority of the Oriental religions.

That these objections may very fairly be made I admit. Yet it must be remembered that the license to treat a subject in whatsoever way he may choose is the privilege of every author; and that it is seldom it fails to the lot of any subject to be treated in one and the same manner by a variety of writers. In all religions and philosophies there are, so to speak, two sects, one of which is less rigid than the other. The Pharisees have their Hillel and their school of Shammai. The [illegible]ve their Catholics and Protestants; the C[illegible]eir Jesuits and Jansenists; and the Protestants [illegible]odox and

dissent. And so with the subject of this work. I have ventured to treat of two schools of thought, closely allied one with the other, under the one name of Pantheism.

The first school is that which believes God and Nature to be one and the same thing; which thinks He is at once the Maker and the Material; which, in the words of the Vedas, pictures him to be at the same time both the Potter and the Clay. This is Pantheism proper. It is Pantheism in its truest and most comprehensive form, and against which no objection to my treatment of the name can be raised.

The other school of which I shall treat is not Pantheism proper. Yet I think it may be justly called a phase of Pantheism. It is that school which refuses to give an opinion upon the nature of God, whether He be Creator alone or whether He be Creator and Creation in one. But it so far resembles Pantheism proper in that it believes a true knowledge of Nature to be in reality a true knowledge of God. If, on the one hand, God be both Creator and Creation; if, that is to say, the various phases of nature be but various phenomena having for their noumenon God, then an intimate acquaintance with the various beauties and marvels of Nature implies an intimate acquaintance with the various perfections of God. If, on the other hand, God be Creator alone and Nature but His handiwork, the school still believes the only way of attaining a knowledge and adoration of God is by a reverent investigation of His works.

Pantheism as depicted by both these schools has ever refused even in its crudest form to make idols of wood and of stone, still less idols of books and traditions. It believes [illegible] revelation God has made of himself is through [illegible] and if man would attain a knowledge of God, [illegible] ttain it through a knowledge of those works.

This [illegible]sm, and the subject of this work is a

history of the various phases through which Pantheism has passed.

We perceive, then, that the distinguishing mark of Pantheism is that even in its crudest forms it never personifies its God or the objects of nature. The early Greek philosophers were crude enough in believing that air, water, or fire were the first principles; yet it was an immense step gained that they should depersonify those elements instead of worshipping them under the names of Zeus, Poseidon and Hades.

If it be objected that I have called religions Pantheistic which are overlain with idolatries, incarnations, and legends, the answer is, those idolatries, incarnations, and legends have been an abuse and an aftergrowth, and are not of the same nature as the religion in its first and purest form. We do not judge of the use by the abuse; and in like manner we must not refuse to call a religion Pantheistic, because in long course of years it became paganised, occupying itself with worship of symbols, inventions of trinities, angels, and marvels, and became essentially and wholly anti-Pantheistic.

In writing a history of Monotheism we should naturally and rightly count the Jews amongst those who are Monotheists. Yet there were times when the Jews could fall down and worship the golden calf; when they became idolaters; when they ceased to be Monotheists. And so with Vedaism and other religions I have classed as Pantheistic. The ritual and ceremonies of these religions are strongly pervaded with idol worship, with trinities, with polytheism. Yet I be[illegible]e I am right in judging that these religions were in their first and purest form essentially Pantheistic. But Pantheism is strictly a [illegible]ligion for the few, not for the many. The great m[illegible]eople are as little capable of Pantheism as the[illegible]notheism. They are not capable of lofty abstra[illegible] must have recourse to forms and ceremonies, to i[illegible]d pictures.

They feel that if they did not have some form they would lose all spirit. They would become unthinking, indifferent, gradually brutal, sinking into utter godlessness. Anything better than that! Any religion, however paganised, is better than want of all religion. A man must have fallen into the deepest abyss, into the lowest depth of degradation, if he have lost all concern as to whence he has come, whither he is going; if he do not feel that of all things important for him to know the most important is that which teaches him his 'vital relations to this mysterious universe,' what is his highest duty; what acts he is to perform, what to leave unperformed. The most pregnant fact to discover in a man or in a nation is to discover in what way he feels himself to be spiritually related to the unseen world. If he find that without some form, some ceremony, he incurs the risk of gradually losing all spirit, all connection with what is beyond and above himself, then let him indulge in some form and some ceremony; and let the ruler or statesman believe it his highest duty to provide a form as simple and free from idol worship as may be. Yet I believe that for such as are capable of lofty abstractions and of spiritualised ideals, the worship of Nature is a higher and holier worship than is that of books and of images. If in the lower minds a practice of form is needful for the preservation of the spirit, in the higher minds their spiritual relation to what is most holy and sublime runs the risk of degradation, almost of blasphemy and parody, by genuflexions, stated hours of prayer, and praises by rote.

The whole history of intellectual development is the history of one founder after another arising, teaching a pure and lofty religion, received by a few earnest disciples; handed down to the succeeding generation with the addition of a few ceremonies; handed down to the next with the addition of more rites and of more ceremonies; handed down to the subsequent generations with traditions of miracles and wonders, till it

becomes gradually so paganised, so debased, that the better minds rise against it in utter indignation, believing the religion itself must be foul that could tolerate such practices, forgetful that the brightest nugget is oftenest most immersed in clay. The religion dies away, its founder is forgotten or becomes a byeword among men. Another teacher arises; another religion is founded, equally pure and sublime as the former, to sink gradually through perversion and paganisation into the same forgetfulness or into the same condemnation. The teacher and the ceremonial die away. Yet Pantheism, like Monotheism, never dies. It appears incongruously, in different quarters of the globe, in widely intervening centuries, in the minds and hearts of men totally differing one from the other.

Pantheism has one inestimable advantage over all other religions, however sublime they may be: it is never in antagonism to science. As much as science enlarges its boundaries, so much exactly does Pantheism increase in loftiness. What a vast step, what an immense interval between the conceptions of the first Pantheist and the conceptions of a Newton! In the former case men believed this small globe of ours to be a wide-spread plain, chiefest in the universe, the moon and stars bright candles to give man light by night; the sun a more brilliant candle to lighten him by day; these stars, these planets, this sun, this earth, all raiments and garments of the invisible God! A beautiful thought truly, and in its nature essentially religious. Yet how much more beautiful, how *infinitely* more religious, when the thought enlarged, expanded, and gradually grew into a knowledge that this so-wonderful earth was but a small planet whirling with other planets of various size round one central sun; that the moon was a satellite whirling round our planet, and that some of these other planets had several moons whirling in attendance upon them! Surely man's conception of God must be more adoring, more reverent than before he knew of

these things. Whether God be creator of all these, or whether they are the visible shadows of which God be the reality, it matters little. Science is the book which teaches him about his God. Now that man's knowledge of nature has increased, his reverence for God must be in the same ratio increased. Yet this knowledge of the solar system was but infinitesimal to the knowledge that was presently to be his. He was soon to learn that this sun, with its attendant planets, was but one amongst an incalculable number of suns; that each of the fixed stars was a sun, with probably an attendant number of planets; that the faint, indistinct, cloud-like appearance we term nebula is in reality a cluster of these wonderful suns; that many nebulæ are constantly being discovered, as there are many stars. Yet all that has been already discovered is as nothing to what we have yet to discover, until our brains whirl and our hearts faint at the immensity of the universe, and we say with him of old, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.'

'This green, flowery, rock-built earth,' says Carlyle, 'the trees, the mountains, rivers, many-sounding seas;—that great deep sea of azure that swims overhead, the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain; what *is* it? Ay, what? At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all. It is not by our superior insight that we escape the difficulty; it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our want of insight. It is by *not* thinking that we cease to wonder at it. Hardened round us, encasing wholly every notion we form, is a wrappage of traditions, hearsays, mere *words*. We call that fire of the black thunder-cloud "electricity," and lecture learnedly about it, and the like out of glass and silk; but *what* is it? [illegible] it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? Sci[illegible] much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude

of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle, wonderful, inscrutable, magical, and more, to whosoever will *think* of it.

'The great mystery of Time were then no other; the illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called Time; rolling, rushing on, swift, silent, like an all-embracing ocean tide, on which we and all the universe swim like exhalations; like apparitions which *are*, and then *are* not: this is forever very literally a miracle; a thing to strike us dumb,—for we have no word to speak about it. This universe, ah me!—what could the wild man know of it; what can we yet know? That it is a Force and thousandfold complexity of forces; a force which is *not we*. That is all; it is not we, it is altogether different from *us*. Force, force, everywhere force; we ourselves a mysterious force in the centre of that. "There is not a leaf rotting in the highway but has force in it: how else could it rot?" Nay, surely to the atheistic thinker, if such a one were possible, it must be a miracle too, this huge illimitable whirlwind of force which envelops us here; never resting whirlwind, high as immensity, old as eternity. What is it? God's creation, the religious people answer; it is the Almighty God's! Atheistic science babbles poorly of it, with scientific nomenclatures, experiments and what not, as if it were a poor dead thing to be bottled up in Leyden jars, and sold over counters; but the natural sense of man, in all times, if he will honestly apply his sense, proclaims it to be a living thing,—ah, an unspeakable god-like thing, towards which the best attitude for us, after never so much science, is awe, devout prostration and humility of soul; worship, if not in words, then in silence.'

Carlyle is not the only living great writer [illegible] whose works we could quote passages pervaded with Pantheism.

It is sometimes said that there are few men who pass

through life without having been conscious of some moments of Pessimism creeping over them. There are few men also, I believe, at all events of those who are most thoughtful, who have not occasionally had their moments of Pantheism: when they have felt that of all religions the religion of Pantheism is the most noble and the most elevated.

On a summer's evening, when soft white fleecy clouds are gradually becoming tinged with the rays of the setting sun, when a portion of the firmament seems decked with a halo of roseate and golden glory, which lessening and lessening as the sun goes down gradually fades away; the pale young moon, hitherto rendered almost imperceptible by the greater glory of the sun, now seems to take courage and shows herself in her calm silvery beauty. Her image is reflected inthe clear lake beneath our feet. Her movements appear slow; so slow, indeed, that we fail to perceive them. Yet little more than an hour we have watched her, when she too sinks and goes from our sight as the sun had gone before her. The evening star appears. Night comes on. One star after another of varied size and brightness gradually appears until the firmament seems gemmed with myriads of exquisite orbs. Some of these, too, are reflected in the lake beneath us. So clear is the lake, so wonderfully real the reflection, that we are almost tempted to ask ourselves which is the original, which is the image. What matters it? Do we not know that neither the original nor the image have the faintest resemblance to the reality? What is there in yon tiny point of light that resembles Jupiter—in bulk more than fourteen hundred times larger than our earth? What in that other point of light to tell us of Saturn and his rings? Or, to take a broader flight, what is there in that faint indistinct haze, nicknamed by us the Milky Way, to tell us of the glorious suns, and almost incalculable number of suns, of which our own sun is in all probability but a weak and insignificant member?

Nay, this very earth upon which we are standing, this huge flat immovable plain, what is it in reality? A round globe—whirling with such rapidity, the astronomers tell us, that it travels at the rate of nineteen miles in one second of time. Ah me! During the hours we have been watching the heavens in rapt meditation this earth has been so busily travelling and travelling that it would require an adept in arithmetic to tell us how far she has gone. To travel nineteen miles in one second of time, and yet for us to be unconscious of it! As far as our sensations go, it would have been all one if she had not budged one inch. What does it all mean? we ask ourselves half-sadly. Why should everything appear to us so utterly unlike the reality? Nay, is there a reality after all? We look again up to that vast firmament, with its innumerable stars, and nebulæ, and planets. We remember what a small portion of that great expanse we can perceive from where we are standing. We try to picture to ourselves somewhat of what astronomy teaches—how from this star the light we see left its habitation three and a half years since, how from that star ten years since, how from another a hundred and twenty years ago; how, according to Mr. Hind, there are some stars so far-distant from our earth that it must take hundreds and in some cases even thousands of years before their light can reach us. A feeling of awe, of bewilderment, almost of reverent worship is creeping over us. *The stars are teaching us.* They have neither speech nor language, yet their *voices* are heard amongst them. Sublime voices! teaching us that beneath all these phenomena there is a noumenon, beneath all these appearances there is a reality. And the name of that Reality is God.

The summer's night is very short, and in the absorption of our thought we have forgotten how the time has sped. We are only reminded of it by that faint streak of light arising in the east. The sun is gradually returning. The stars are slowly fading. Morning breaks, arousing the

birds to sing their matitutinal hymn of praise. We look back to the last six or eight hours and think of the wonderful changes through which the firmament has passed: the glory of the setting sun; the pale young moon and evening star in quiet possession of the heavens; the dark sky gemmed and studded with myriads of exquisite orbs; the gradual return of day and peaceful deep-blue ocean form the firmament presents. Do all these varied changes represent the unchangeable God? Yes; in our moments of Pantheism we feel they are all visible shadows of the invisible God.

Is man alone, then, to be debarred from the pervading presence of God? What can there be god-like in him? The works of nature are so wonderful and solemn and sublime that it is easy for us to believe they are emanations from the great God of all. We can comprehend without difficulty that God and the works of nature may be one and the same thing. But what is there god-like in this weak impotent creature called Man? At the mercy of the winds and tides and weather, the prey of famines and plagues and disasters, with his senses so feeble and impotent, so inferior in acuteness and accuracy to the majority of other animals lower than himself, that in his moments of Pessimism he is wont to think they were only given him to deceive him, to teach him how and what things are *not*, instead of how and what they *are*. The sun, indeed, may be a fit emblem of God. But turn from the sun to man, and think how little there is of God in him. Poor finite man! to whose weak sense this so-wonderful sun appears a small round globe, little more than a foot in diameter. He cannot even look at it for long, for the brilliancy of its rays bring tears to his weakly eyes and obscure their vision.

Well, yes! Man indeed is incapable of a protracted gaze at the sun. Yet has he contrived to measure its exact distance from the earth, and has discovered it to be

more than ninety-three millions of miles away from it. He has weighed the sun, and has found it to contain more than four hundred millions of millions of cubic miles. He has investigated it, and has discovered the exact metals it consumes. He can foretell every eclipse that will take place, whether of sun or moon; the return of each comet, the transit of each planet. All this he has done, and much more. He has searched out the wonders of the heavens and the earth and the ocean. He bows down in awe before them all. And yet he owns, half in abasement at his own temerity, that more wonderful, more inscrutable than them all is the mind of man.

Ah, yes! The works of nature are miraculous and magical; but most miraculous and most magical is that strangely wonderful, immaterial, invisible thing called *mind*. Look, too, at man in his moments of heroism. Regard him and wonder at his valour and courage, his rectitude and endurance. Is there not something truly god-like about him, then? Have we not all, each and every one of us, felt that there is a divinity within us giving us thoughts and impelling us to deeds so great that we feel we are not the authors of them ourselves? Are we not at times conscious that we are rays emanating from the Creator, to be re-absorbed in Him hereafter?

'The doctrine of emanation,' says Dr. Draper,[1] 'has a double interpretation. It sets forth the universe, either as a part of the substance of God, or as an insubstantial something proceeding from Him: the former a conception more tangible and readily grasped by the mind; the latter of unapproachable sublimity, when we recall the countless beautiful and majestic forms which nature on all sides presents. This visible world is only the shadow of God. In the further consideration of this doctrine of the issue forthcoming, or emanation of the universe, an illustration

[1] 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' by Draper, vol. i. p. 226.

may not be without value. Out of the air which may be pure and tranquil the watery vapour often comes forth in a visible form, a misty fleece, perhaps no larger than the hand of a man at first, but a great cloud in the end. The external appearance the forthcoming form presents is determined by the incidents of the times; it may have a pure whiteness or a threatening blackness; its edges may be fringed with gold. In the bosom of such a cloud the lightning may be pent up, from it the thunder may be heard; but even if it should not offer these manifestations of power, if its disappearance should be as tranquil as its formation, it has not existed in vain. No cloud ever yet formed on the sky without leaving an imperishable impression on the earth, for while it yet existed there was not a plant whose growth was not delayed, whose substance was not lessened. And of such a cloud the production of which we have watched how often has it happened to us to witness its melting away into the untroubled air? From the untroubled air it came, and to the pure untroubled air it will return. Now, such a cloud is made up of countless myriads of microscopic drops, each maintaining itself separate from the others and each, small though it may be, having an individuality of its own. The grand aggregate may vary its colour and shape; it may be the scene of unceasing and rapid interior movements of many kinds, yet it presents its aspect unchanged, or changes tranquilly and silently, still glowing in the light that falls on it, still casting its shadow on the ground. It is an emblem of the universe according to the ancient doctrine, showing us how the visible may issue from the invisible and return again thereto; that a drop too small for the unassisted eye to see may be the representative of a world. The spontaneous emergence and disappearance of a cloud is the emblem of a transitory universe issuing forth and disappearing again, to be succeeded by other universes, other like creations in the long lapse of time.

'From the material quality assigned to the soul by the early Ionian schools, as that it was air, fire, or the like, there was a gradual passage to the opinion of its immateriality. To this precision was given by the assertion that it not only had an affinity with, but even is a part of God. Whatever were the views entertained of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, they directly influenced the conclusions arrived at respecting the nature of the soul. Greek philosophy in its highest state of development regarded the soul as something more than the sum of the moments of thinking. It held it to be a portion of the Deity himself. This doctrine is the necessary corollary of Pantheism. It contemplated a past eternity, a future immortality. Viewing the soul as merely a spectator and stranger in this world, they regarded it as occupying itself rather in contemplation than in action, asserting that in its origin it is an immediate emanation from the Divinity—not a modification nor a transformation of the Supreme, but a portion of Him. It is like a spark separated from the flame: it migrates from body to body, sometimes found in the higher, then in the lower, and again in the higher tribes of life, occupying first one, then another, as circumstances demand. And, as a drop of water pursues a devious career in the cloud, in the rain, in the river, in a part of a plant or part of an animal, but soon or later inevitably finds its way back to the sea from which it came, so the soul, however various its fortunes may have been, sinks back at last into the Divinity from which it emanated.

'Both Greeks and Hindoos turned their attention to the delusive phenomena of the world. Among the latter many figuratively supposed that what we call visible nature is a mere illusion befalling the soul, because of its temporary separation from God. In the Buddhist philosophy the world is thus held to be a creature of the imagination. But among some in those ancient, as among others in more

modern times, it was looked upon as having a more substantial condition, and the soul as a passive mirror in which things reflected themselves, or perhaps it might to some extent be the partial creator of its own forms. However that may be, its final destiny is a perfect repose after its absorption in the Supreme. On this topic of ancient philosophy an illustration may not be without use. As a bubble floats upon the sea, and, by reason of its form, reflects whatever objects may be present, whether the clouds in the sky or the stationary and moving things on the shore, nay, even to a certain extent depicts the sea itself on which it floats, and from which it arose, offering these various forms not only in shapes resembling the truth in the proper order of light and shade, the proper perspective, the proper colours, but, in addition thereto, tincturing them all with a play of hues arising from itself, so it is with the soul. From a boundless and unfathomable sea the bubble arose. It does not in any respect differ in nature from its source. From water it came and mere water it ever is. It gathers its qualities, so far as external things are concerned, only from its form and from the environment in which it is placed. As the circumstances to which it is exposed vary, it floats here and there, merging into other bubbles it meets, and emerging from the collected foam again. In such migrations it is now larger, now smaller; at one moment passing into new shapes, at another lost in a coalescence with those around it. But whatever these its migrations, these its vicissitudes, there awaits it an inevitable destiny, an absorption, a re-incorporation with the ocean. In that final moment what is it that is lost? What is it that has come to an end? Not the essential substance, for water it was before it was developed, water it was during its existence, and water it still remains, ready to be re-expanded.'

The above passages from Dr. Draper will assist the reader greatly in comprehending in what the ancient

doctrines of Pantheism and Emanation principally consist.

If, then, the doctrine of Pantheism be not only so elevating but so intelligible, the question naturally arises why it has so few acknowledged disciples. For although, as we shall presently show, the majority of Oriental religions and Greek philosophies are pervaded with Pantheism, the pervading is, so to speak, an unconscious one. Religious men, for the most part, do not speak of themselves as disciples of Pantheism in the same way that they denominate themselves disciples of Brahminism or Judaism, of Catholicism or Protestantism. In most of these religions will be found passages which have a Pantheistic tendency. But we have to seek for them; they seldom make themselves disclosed to us unless we are on the look-out for them. And it is more than probable that writers of passages which are certainly Pantheistic in their tendency would yet disclaim all sympathy with Pantheism as a religion. Why should this be so? The more superficial answer has already been given. Pantheism is too abstract and severe a religion for the majority of men. It does not satisfy their craving for personality, and leaves ungratified their love of images and marvels, of ritual and ceremonial.

But there is another objection alleged against Pantheism, graver and deeper in importance than the former—an objection which has as much weight with earnest men, or indeed more weight, than it has with those who are shallow and unthinking. It is that the doctrine of Pantheism gives no explanation of the Mystery of Evil, either in its origin or its existence. Nay, to some extent the undoubted fact of the existence of sin and misery would seem to prove a startling contradiction of the truth of Pantheism. *For how can evil be pervaded by God?* If we have, as I believe we have, the innate consciousness within us of the existence of a God, we also have the innate consciousness of the perfection of that God. A God who is not all-perfect,

omnipresent, and omniscient would seem almost like a contradiction in terms.

God, then, must be good. Yet evil is an undoubted, undeniable fact. We have seen how reasonable it is to suppose that man is pervaded by God in his moments of heroism and nobility. We have shown how comprehensible and rational is the doctrine that would embody God and the wonderful works of Nature as one and the same thing. It is easy enough for us to believe a Christ and St. Paul, a Newton and Spinoza, a Shakspere and Milton were inspired by the pervading spirit of God. But, alas! there is another side of the picture. Go to the byeways and alleys of a great city. Look at that dissipated wretch reeling from the gin-palace, with his drunken look of sottish imbecility. He attempts vainly to find his way homeward, but his eyes are blurred and his gait unsteady. He endeavours with some remains of former courtesy to ask some passer-by to guide his steps. But his voice refuses to utter the words, and he sinks down in lassitude to sleep off the effects of his drunken bout on the nearest resting-place. Ah! he is not utterly vile. He has known better days. Drink does not make him brutal; it only makes him imbecile and degraded and unhappy. Poor fool! thy life is not an enviable one. It may be equally divided into three portions: hours spent in drunkenness, in sleep, and in remorse! Drink has been a curse and ruin to thee! *Was God, then, in that drink?*

But now from that same gin-palace issues a man so foul and loathsome, so brutal and violent, that, compared to him, the former drunkard seems quiet and refined and human. For he owed his ruin solely to drink; but with this last, if there had been no such thing as drink in the world, he would still have been cruel and ferocious, lawless and wicked. Drink makes his vices still more vicious; but they would have been vicious enough without its aid. He requires no additional stimulant to render him a plague

and a scourge, a thing to be shuddered at by all who come near him. Look at him now. A hungry lean-featured woman is near him asking for money to buy herself bread. It is his wife—his wife whom he has left without necessary food in order to procure himself drink. Does he heed her pitiful complaints? Yes, they enrage him. Ah! he has lifted the stick. Blow after blow falls upon her thin shoulders. He is not stayed by her entreaties, by her assurances that she will never more make clamour for her bread. He goes on in his ruthless cruelty, till she can no longer control her cries, and a crowd is collected. He is taken away, to be locked up for the night, or to undergo some trivial imprisonment, as the case may be. Either way he will come out as ferocious as he went in. *Does God pervade a man like this?*

Or if it be said that such examples are not fair ones, that these men have been debauched and ruined by drink, and are no more responsible for their actions than lunatics; that drink is not an evil, in itself it is not only harmless, but beneficial; that ignorant men, seeing that a little of this beneficial spirit was of so much value to them, went on gradually increasing the quantity till they became maddened and violent; at all events utterly unable to free themselves from its influence—if all this be alleged against our examples, let us take others where drunkenness has not the slightest part in the promotion of evil; where it is not the physical strength which is so perverted, but the mental.

Let us turn to some of the larger prisons and see there the swindler and forgerer, the poisoner and thief. It is neither drink nor ignorance that has made these men sin. We have but to look at their brows to discover that they are endowed with their full portion of sense. Do such men form a small proportion of society? Alas! no. The cleverest and most successful sinners are those that are not found out. The clever impostor who has deluded this foolish woman of her money; the swindler who has de-

camped with the savings of that unhappy widow, will they ever be discovered? No. The women know they have lost their money; but there is not sufficient proof to bring it home to any one individual. The swindlers have played their game too well for that. Or, again, with the secret crime of poisoning: how many apparently unaccountable deaths might be traced to this one cause; only that the doer of the deed has done his work so well that there was not even a suspicion of poison, still less of himself as poisoner? Or, again, of secret sins even more foul and loathsome, sins which could scarcely be written in a decent book, that rarely come to our ears, but when they do come utterly startle us with the magnitude of their abomination.

Ah! let us leave the subject. It is the knowledge of such crimes that makes pessimists of men. Let us commune instead with Nature, and enable our thoughts to become holy and pure and calm once more. We will leave the cities, with their feverish bustle and din and vice, and betake ourselves to some quiet spot by the sea. The cool fresh salt odour of the sea seems wafted to us even before we are in sight of the sea itself.

As we walk down to the shore pessimism seems to be gradually lifting itself off from us. We feel strangely relieved; not so much from the change of atmosphere, for the day is hot and the air everywhere oppressive, as from the exquisite sense of quietude and repose. There seems no possibility of sin or misery here. Our only companions on the shore are some young children playing with sand and pebbles on the beach. A wonderful silence pervades everything. There is scarcely a ripple on the sea; and the heavy solemn clouds in the far distance are all portents of a coming storm. We turn to the children and tell them a storm is brewing; that it would be wiser for them to return home. The little ones play on, too much absorbed in their innocent game to heed advice. Ah! the storm is coming

nearer. The far-distant, low, deep thunder had not power to disturb the children. But now comes a sudden crash which terrifies them, and they wildly rush to us for protection. But it is too late. One of them while in the act of running has been struck with a vivid flash of lightning and lies unconscious. We take her in our arms, and, following the direction of the other children, carry her to her home. Will she recover? Yes, after a few hours consciousness returns, but only for us to learn that she is blinded for ever. She has saved her life, but has lost her sight. Henceforth that fair young life, a moment since so full of happiness and promise, must be spent in darkness and gloom, all the more oppressive for having been previously acquainted with the blessing of vision.

We leave the house in utter sadness. Why should it have happened thus? we ask ourselves. *Was God in that lightning?* Ah me! pessimism is following us even here. We know not what to think. In trying to flee from one form of misery we have only come upon another. And in our bitterness we are ready to cry out, 'There is no God. The whole world is given up to sin and misery and death. The innocent suffer with the guilty, and righteousness is not.'

I suppose we have all known moments like these; when calamities fall thick upon us; when the righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart; when the wicked prosper and the guiltless are punished; when we are impelled in spite of ourselves to exclaim, 'Can there be justice with God?' When we join issue with the questionings of Job and remember that 'One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.'[1] Unlooked-for troubles surround us;

[1] Job xxi. 23-26.

undeserved penalties overpower us, and we again cry out with him of Uz, 'When I looked for good then evil came unto me, and when I waited for light there came darkness.'[1] At such times have we not all of us felt a sad, dreary pessimism creeping over us, from which we endeavour to free ourselves in vain?

Well, I believe it is this feeling of pessimism, this consciousness of so much sin and misery, this mystery of the existence of evil, that prevents the majority of men from becoming Pantheists, as it equally prevents them from becoming Monotheists. For, disguise it as they will, the majority of men are not Monotheists. They seek for an explanation of this strange mystery of evil, and as a solution call in the aid of a second god, an inferior and a bad god. He is generally supposed to be created by that other God, but is sufficiently independent of Him to be perpetually thwarting his plans by his own evil doings. Does such an explanation give any rational explanation of evil? It appears to me that all theological explanations of the difficulty take away from the purity of Pantheism and of Monotheism without (save with the exception, perhaps, of the Persian dualism) in the least solving that difficulty. As well believe with the Pantheists that God pervades everything, whether good or evil; or with the Monotheists that God is the creator of everything, whether good or evil, as with the majority of Christians who believe that God certainly is not the creator of evil, but is only the creator and preserver of the author of evil. The explanation is no explanation. It is utterly illogical, and leaves the difficulty just where it was before. It appears to me that the supposition of devils and evil spirits takes away both from the purity of Monotheism and Pantheism, and at the same time leaves the mystery of evil as dark a mystery as ever.

Pantheism is generally found in greater purity in phi-

[1] Job xxx. 26.

losophy than in religion, chiefly for the reason we have already given. Religion must have an explanation of the mystery of evil; and if she cannot find a satisfactory solution she will content herself with an unsatisfactory one. Philosophy, on the other hand, suffers no make-beliefs. She acknowledges that evil is still a mystery to her, probably an unfathomable mystery; but yet in some humble undefined way she believes that all things will work together for good. She owns with one of her greatest poets:

> All nature is but art unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
> All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good.

Although it is only in rare moments of optimism that she is able to agree with the last two lines of that noble passage:—

> And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One thing is clear, whatever is, is right.

Unfortunately she sees many things that are *not* right, that can by no possible means be called right. Why such things should be allowed she does not know, and therefore will not pretend to say. She only feels that the greater sum of human miseries comes from human ignorance; that it is as true now as it was of old, 'My people perish for lack of knowledge'; and she teaches each man that his highest duty is to gain knowledge for himself, so as to be able to impart it to those about him.

And as we proceed to obey that mandate we find that almost every misery can be traced to some transgression, either conscious or unconscious, of the laws of nature; that almost all our sins come from some undue predominance of one of two qualities which are nevertheless both essential to our wellbeing; but both of which require strict regulation, for

> Two principles in human nature reign:
> Self-love to urge and reason to restrain.

> Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call ;
> Each works its end to move or govern all,
> And to their *proper* operation still
> Ascribe all good : to their *im*proper ill.

And although of course it is not pretended that this explanation wholly solves the mystery of evil, it is at least a more satisfactory solution than the hypothesis of an evil spirit created by God, and yet perpetually thwarting the wishes and designs of God, as well as a more reverent solution ; for it takes away from the purity neither of Monotheism or of Pantheism. For it must be remembered that though Monotheism is not always Pantheism, Pantheism is always the strictest Monotheism. In ancient and somewhat metaphysical language it believes that the One is the All and that the All is the One. In much more modern language it teaches that

> All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body Nature is and God the soul.

Enough, however, has been said upon this subject ; perhaps, indeed, overmuch. For our business as historian is not so much to enter into the question of the merits or demerits of Pantheism as it is to relate the various stages through which Pantheism has passed in the proper order of their occurrence.

Pantheism, then, in the generally accepted meaning of the word, is the name given to that system of speculation which in its spiritual form identifies the universe with God. Its antiquity is undoubtedly great, for it is prevalent in the oldest known civilisation of the world. The Hindu Pantheism is taught especially by the Vedas, which are religious books ; by the Vedanta, which is a philosophy ; and by the Bhagavadgita, which is a poem partly religious, partly philosophic. Hindu Pantheism is purely spiritual in its character ; matter and (finite) mind are both absorbed in the fathomless abyss of illimitable and absolute being. Greek Pantheism, though it doubtless originated in the

same way as that of India, is at once more varied and more ratiocinative in its method of exposition. The most decided and most spiritual representatives of this philosophy were the Eleatics, and the so-called 'Alexandrian' Neo-Platonists, in whom we see clearly for the first time the influence of the East upon Greek thought. The doctrines of Emanation, of Ecstasy, expounded by Plotinus and Proclus, no less than the fantastic Dæmonism of Iamblichus, point to Persia and India as their birthplace, and in fact differ from the mystic teaching of the Vedanta only by being divested of the peculiar mythological allusions in which the philosophy is sometimes dressed up.

During the middle ages speculation was for the most part held in with tight reins by the Church, and we consequently hear little or nothing of Pantheism. Almost the only philosopher who seems to have given any attention to the subject was John Scotus Erigena, who was probably led to it by his study of the Alexandrians; but his speculations do not seem to have been thought by him incompatible with the Christian faith. He is regarded as the link between ancient and modern Pantheism. And we find in him now a reflection of the East and of Greece, and now a foreshadowing of the doctrines of Schelling and Hegel.

The more modern Pantheism is chiefly represented by Giordano Bruno and Benedict or Baruch Spinoza. Yet Newton also deserves mention. He is so completely known by his marvellous scientific discoveries that we are apt to pass by him as a philosopher. Yet we must not finish this introductory chapter of Pantheistic history without quoting the following passage from the General Scholium at the end of the third book of his *Principia*: 'The Supreme God exists necessarily, and by the same necessity he exists *always* and *everywhere*. Whence also he is all-similar—all eye, all ear, all brain, all arm, all power to perceive, to understand, and to act, but in a manner not

at all human, not at all corporeal, in a manner utterly unknown to us. As a blind man has no idea of colours, so have we no idea of the manner by which the all-wise God perceives and understands all things. He is utterly void of all body and bodily figure, and can therefore neither be seen, nor touched, nor heard, nor ought to be worshipped under the representation of any corporeal thing. We have ideas of his attributes, but what the real substance of anything is we know not.'[1]

Such a passage appearing in any work of an accredited believer in revelation, such as Newton, may perhaps create some slight surprise. Yet it must be remembered that many portions of the New Testament, as well as the majority of the more spiritual Psalms of David, are pervaded with Pantheistic ideas, and Pantheistic interpretations both of God and Nature.

[1] Quoted by Draper in the 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' p. 121.

BOOK THE FIRST

ORIENTAL PANTHEISM

All-knowing!—all unknown!—and yet well-known!
Near though remote! and, though unfathomed, felt
And, though invisible, for ever seen!
And seen in all! the great and the minute:
Each globe above, with its gigantic race,
Each flower, each leaf, with its small people swarmed
(Those puny vouchers of Omnipotence),
To the first thought that asks, 'From whence?' declare
Their common source. Thou fountain, running o'er
In rivers of communicated joy!
Who gav'st us speech for far, far humbler themes!
Say, by what name shall I presume to call
Him I see burning in these countless suns,
As Moses in the bush? Illustrious Mind!
The whole creation less, far less, to thee,
Than that to the creation's ample round,
How shall I name thee?—How my labouring soul
Heaves underneath the thought, too big for birth!—YOUNG.

CHAPTER I.

THE VEDAS.

It is in the oldest known literature of the world that we first become acquainted with Pantheistic religion and Pantheistic philosophy. It is in the Vedas that we find for the first time not merely traces or indications of Pantheism, but Pantheism itself in its full growth and maturity.

The Vedas, or sacred books of the Brahmans, date so far back in the annals of antiquity that it is not easy for us to gain even a proximate knowledge of their real age. The best authorities, however, seem to agree in thinking the earliest Veda could not have been written much less than four thousand years ago. 'Veda' means originally knowing or knowledge, and this name is given by the Brahmans not alone to one work, but to the whole body of their most ancient sacred literature. The only real Veda, however, is the Rig-Veda, but in general the name is understood to comprise four collections of hymns which are respectively known by the names of Rig-Veda, Yagur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. But according to M. Max Müller these three last Vedas are chiefly comprised of extracts taken from the Rig-Veda, together with charms, incantations, and sacrificial formulas; but in reality they deserve the name of Veda as little as the Talmud deserves the name of Bible. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves principally to the Rig-Veda.

This Rig-Veda is a collection of ten works, and contains

altogether 1,028 hymns. Orthodox Indian theologians believe that each of these hymns was in some way the work of the Deity; not a single line is supposed by them to be the work of human authors. Yet there is nothing in the hymns themselves to warrant this belief. In many a hymn the author says plainly that he or his friends made it as a carpenter makes a chariot: that he made it to please the gods. And again, another utters for the first time that famous hymn the Gâyatri, which now for nearly four thousand years has been the daily prayer of every Brahman, and is still repeated every morning by millions of pious worshippers, 'Let us meditate on the adorable light of the divine Creator: may he rouse our minds.' There is nothing whatever in the Vedas themselves to show that they aspired to be inspirations revealed from God himself. Such a pretension is entirely the produce of a later age. In no country has the theory of revelation been so minutely elaborated as in India. But the theory is wholly the work of an after-growth, so to speak, when the purity of the real Veda was obscured by the sacerdotalism and ceremonial of the Brahmanic priesthood. The views entertained of revelation by the orthodox theologians of India are far more minute and elaborate than those of the most extreme advocates of verbal inspiration in Europe. The human element called 'paurusheyatva' in Sanscrit is driven out of every corner or hiding-place; and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time, every allusion to historical events, of which there are not a few, is explained away with a zeal and ingenuity worthy of a better cause. The name for revelation in Sanskrit is 'Sruti,' which means hearing, and this title distinguishes the Vedic hymns, and at a later age the Brahmanas also, from all other works which, however sacred and authoritative to the Hindu mind, are admitted to have been composed by human authors. The Laws of Manu, for instance, according to the Brahmanic theology, are not

Sruti, but only Smriti, which means recollection or tradition. And if these laws or any other work of authority can be proved in any point to be at variance with a single passage of the Veda, their authority is at once overruled.

The majority of religious nations have distinctions like these. An obvious illustration in point is the distinction we ourselves draw between the Bible and Apocrypha. But, as we said before, there is nothing in the Vedas themselves to show in any way that they purport to be written by a divine author. The poets of the Vedas seem conscious, it is true, of a divine influence; in some passages they even speak of their hymns as 'god-given.' But the inspiration they feel is only the inspiration we all feel when we are engaged in heartfelt prayer, or filled with praise and thanksgiving for blessings given or bestowed. Nay, in reading some of these beautiful Rig-Veda hymns, the first literary product of nearly the earliest known civilisation of the entire world, we are strongly reminded at times of the more spiritual Psalms of David. It is natural, perhaps, we should feel some deep interest in the religion of the Veda. For although our religion owes its derivation to a Semitic and not an Aryan origin, we ourselves originated from the Aryan stock.

According to Max Müller the writers of the Vedas were the true ancestors of our race. We are by nature Aryan, Indo-European, not Semitic; our spiritual kith and kin are to be found in India, Persia, Greece, Italy, Germany; not in Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Palestine. Without a knowledge of the Veda we should not be able to understand the reforms of Zoroaster, nor the teaching of Buddha; we should not know what was behind them, or what forces impelled Zoroaster and Buddha to the founding of new religions; how much they received, how much they destroyed, how much they created. The oldest, most primitive, most simple form of Aryan faith finds its expression in the Vedas. The Zend-Avesta, or sacred

writings of the Parsees, represents in its language as well as in its thoughts a branching off from that more primitive stem; a more or less conscious opposition to the worship of the gods of nature as adored in the Veda, and a striving after a more spiritual supreme moral deity, such as Zoroaster proclaimed under the names of Ahura-Magda or Ormuzd. Buddhism, lastly, marks a decided schism, a decided antagonism against the established religion of the Brahmans, a denial of the Vedic gods, and a proclamation of new philosophical and social doctrines.

We shall never be able to study and comprehend the other religions of the Aryan race, if we do not first thoroughly acquaint ourselves with the religion of the Vedas. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the superior morality of the religion of Zoroaster or the grand intellectual ability displayed in the religion of Buddhism, are either of them so deserving of what we commonly understand as religious or communing with God, as is the religion of the Veda. Zoroaster may set forth a higher moral ideal, Buddha may display a higher intellectual ability, but the Hindu is pervaded by a sense of religious absorption utterly unknown to these others.

The religion of the Vedas, be it remembered, knows of no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation, a later degradation of the more primitive worship of ideal gods. We must also remember that the religion of the Vedas is not polytheism in the ordinary sense of the word. It is true that deities are invoked by different names, such as Agni, fire; Sûrya, sun; Ushas, dawn, etc.; but whenever one of these individual gods is invoked it is not conceived as limited by the powers of others, or as superior or inferior in rank. Each god is to the mind of the supplicant as good as all gods. He is felt at the time as a real divinity, as supreme and absolute, without a suspicion of those limitations which to our mind a plurality of gods must entail on every single god. This surely is

not what is understood generally by Polytheism. Still less is it what the majority of people would denominate Monotheism. It is the consciousness that all the deities are but one and the same God, displaying Himself under different forms; that divinities and men and the entire works of nature are but transient phenomena of which the pervading principle, the one Reality, is God.

Max Müller has called this feeling Kathenotheism. I shall venture to give it the more generally comprehensible term of Pantheism. It is that feeling which believes God to be at the same time both the One and the All, the Potter and the Clay, the Maker and the Material. It depicts God as pervading the whole of nature, as dwelling in the souls and tongues of men, as disclosing Himself under the forms of various deities. One poet, for instance, says, 'They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni; then he is the beautiful-winged heavenly Garutmat: that which is One the wise call it in different manners; they call it Agni, Yama, Matarasvan.' And again, 'Wise poets make the beautiful winged, though he is One, manifold by words.'

It would have been our wish to have traced the Hindu religion from the first beginnings of its earliest infancy up to its prime age of maturity; from the crude period of sorcery and fetichism up to the time when the religion was pervaded with abstract Pantheistic ideas and abstract Pantheistic interpretations; and again, to have followed it in its decline and old age, when the purity of the Vedas became indoctrinated and adulterated with the Laws of Manu; when the spiritual form became obscured by the ceremonial; when the worship of God and Nature became lost in the worship of priestcraft and superstition. We should have desired to have thus traced it from its infancy to its old age. But unfortunately we are not able to do so. The great antiquity of the Hindu nation renders it almost impossible for us to be able to trace the Hindu religion from its faintest and first beginnings. We know scarcely

anything of India prior to its stage of civilisation. All nations seem compelled by a sort of natural law to pass through a primary stage of fetichism and idolatry; therefore we may fairly conclude the Hindu nation formed no exception to the rule; but yet, though we may have strong reasons for the formation of this hypothesis, we must nevertheless recollect it is but an hypothesis. The earlier stages of the comparative theology of India are now inaccessible. At a time so remote as to be wholly prehistoric the stage of sorcery must have been passed through.

In the most ancient records remaining we find the Hindu occupying himself with questions requiring a certain amount of culture and intellect even so much as to conceive. We find him, as Max Müller says, 'left to himself to solve the riddle of this world. We see him crawling on like a creature of the earth, with all the desires and weaknesses of his animal nature. Food, wealth, and power, a large family, and a long life are the theme of his daily prayers. But he begins to lift up his eyes. He stares at the tent of heaven and asks who supports it? He opens his ears to the wind and rain and asks them whence and whither? He is awakened from darkness and slumber by the light of the sun, and him whom his eyes cannot behold, and who seems to grant him the daily pittance of his existence, he calls his life, his breath, his brilliant lord and protector. He gives names to all the powers of nature; and after he has called the fire Agni, the sunlight Indra, the storms Maruts, and the dawn Ushas, they all seem to grow naturally into beings like himself, nay, greater than himself. He invokes them, he praises them, he worships them. But still, with all these gods around him, beneath him, above him, he yet seems ill at rest within himself. There, too, in his own breast he has discovered a power that wants a name; a power nearer to him than all the gods of nature; a power that is never mute when he prays, never absent

when he fears or trembles. It seems to inspire his prayers and yet to listen to them ; it seems to live in him and yet to support him and all around him.

'The only name he can find for this mysterious power is Brâhman, for Brâhman meant originally force, will, wish, and the propulsive power of creation. But this impersonal Brâhman, too, as soon as it is named, grows into something strange and divine. It ends by being one of many gods, one of the great triad worshipped to the present day. And still the thought within him has no real name ; that power which is nothing but itself, which supports the gods, the heavens, and every living being floats before his mind, conceived but not expressed. At last he calls it Âtman ; for âtman, originally meaning breath or spirit, comes to mean self and self alone ; self, whether divine or human ; self, whether creating or suffering ; self, whether one or all ; but always self, independent and free. "Who has seen the first-born ?" says the poet, "when he who has no bones (i.e. form) bore him that had bones ? Who went to ask this from anyone that knew it ?" This idea of a divine self once expressed, everything else must acknowledge its supremacy. "Self is the lord of all things. Self is the king of all things. As all the spokes of a wheel are contained in the nave and the circumference, all things are contained in this self ; all selves are contained in this self ; Brâhman itself is but self."

'This Âtman also grew ; but it grew, as it were, without attributes. The sun is called the Self of all that moves and rests, and still more frequently self becomes a mere pronoun. But Âtman remained always free from myth and worship, differing in this from the Brâhman (neuter) who has his temples in India even now, and is worshipped as Brâhman (masculine), together with Vishnû, and Siva, and other popular gods. The idea of the Âtman or Self, like a pure crystal, was too transparent for poetry, and was therefore handed over to philosophy, which afterwards

polished and turned and watched it, as the medium through which all is seen, and in which all is reflected and known.'[1]

Few nations have been so wholly devoted to contemplation and religious meditation as the Hindu. In reading the history of other nations we find it to consist principally in accounts of various kingdoms and dynasties, of wars and battles, of victories and defeats. In a word, we become acquainted with their actions. With the history of the Hindu nation all this is reversed. We learn much of their thoughts, very little indeed of their actions. Politics and wars troubled them but very slightly. Why should they, indeed? Was not the duration of their life on earth a mere drop in the illimitable ocean of eternity? There never was a nation believing so firmly in another world, and so little concerned about this. As Max Müller says, 'their condition on earth is to them a problem; their real and eternal life a simple fact.' They are absorbed in the struggles of thought. Their past is the problem of creation, their future the problem of existence. The only sphere in which the Indian mind finds itself at liberty to act, to create, and to worship is the sphere of religion and philosophy; and nowhere have religious and metaphysical ideas taken root so deeply as in the mind of the Hindu nation. The shape and form which these ideas have taken among the different classes of society and at different periods of civilisation naturally varies from gross superstition to the highest and most sublime spiritualism. But taken as a whole, history supplies no second instance where the inward life of the soul has so completely absorbed all the other faculties of a people.

Nothing perhaps could give us a much clearer notion of the antiquity of the Hindu nation than the fact of our finding this capability of religious abstraction and devotion, this absorption in the ravelling and unravelling of philo-

[1] 'Chips from a German Workshop,' vol. i. pp. 69–70.

sophical and metaphysical problems, existing in a sacred literature written nearly four thousand years ago. When we think of the immense period of time required by a nation just emerging from its first primitive stage of barbarism nearly akin to animalism before it can arrive at its highest stage of maturity; when, instead of savage barbarity and indulgence in animal lusts, we find the passions restrained and kept under due control by the power of the will; when, instead of every endeavour of the mind being concentrated on the gratification of bodily wants and bodily desires, the soul becomes absorbed in the contemplation of a future life; when, instead of grovelling superstition and base fetichism, the intellect becomes capable of abstract conceptions and spiritualised religious ideals; when, in short, we think of the immense periods of time required by a nation before it can attain any degree of civilisation, few things could give us a more explicit or implicit notion of the antiquity of the Hindu nation than a perusal of this Vedic literature. It may not be correct to call the Hindu nation the oldest known civilisation of the world, for I believe the antiquity of Egyptian civilisation is even greater; but in literary efforts the Hindu nation is certainly the most ancient.

The oldest known literature of the world is the Rig-Veda. Yet in this same Veda, written nearly four thousand years ago, may be found passages quite worthy of imitation even now. Many of the hymns, it is true, are more or less foolish; some few perhaps superstitious. In every national literature, at whatever stage of the world's history, there is sure to be found a large proportion of chaff mixed up with the wheat; but there are also hymns of such rare beauty, displaying so great a power of conception, and implying so great a capability of abstraction, that we should find it difficult even in the present day to exhibit any hymns greatly superior to these. Thanks to the exertions of M. Max Müller, we are able to give one specimen of the Vedic

poetry. It is the 129th hymn of the tenth book of the Rig-Veda. It is a hymn which long ago attracted the attention of the eminent soholar H. T. Colebrooke; and now M. Müller, aided, as he tells us, by the kind assistance of a friend, has translated it, and thus rendered it available for the perusal of that large class of English readers who, less learned than himself, are ignorant of the Sanscrit language; and who, were it not for the industry of scholars, would be in consequence forced to remain in ignorance of the beauties of Sanscrit literature:—

> Nor aught nor naught existed; yon bright sky
> Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched above.
> What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?
> Was it the water's fathomless abyss?
> There was not death—yet there was naught immortal;
> There was no confine betwixt day and night;
> The only One breathed breathless by itself.
> Other than It then nothing since has been.
> Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
> In gloom profound—an ocean without light—
> The germ that still lay covered in the husk
> Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.
> Then first came Love upon it, the new spring
> Of mind—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,
> Pondering, this bond between created things,
> And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth
> Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?
> Then seeds were sown, and mighty powers arose—
> Nature below, and power and will above.
> Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here
> Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
> The Gods themselves came later into being.
> Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
> He from whom all this great creation came,
> Whether His will created or was mute,
> The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,
> He knows it—or perchance even He knows not.[1]

In spite of the repeated and oft-recurring invocations of various deities, few nations insist so strongly upon the existence of only one God—one Universal Spirit pervading

[1] 'Chips from a German Workshop,' vol. i. p. 79.

all things. 'There is in truth but one deity, the Supreme Spirit, the Soul of the universe, whose work is the universe.' Other deities may be addressed by various names; but the fact is never lost sight of that there is one Supreme Spirit pervading the universe, pervading mankind, pervading even the deities themselves. Thus one of the writers of the Vedas says: 'The deities are only three, whose places are the earth, the intermediate region, and heaven; namely, fire, air, and the sun. They are pronounced to be the deities of the mysterious names respectively; and (Prajápati) the lord of creatures, is the deity of them collectively. The syllable *Om* intends every deity. It belongs to (Parameshthi) him who dwells in the Supreme abode; it appertains to (Brâhma) the vast one; to (Deva) God; to (Adhyátmá) the superintending Soul. Other deities belonging to these several regions are portions of the three Gods, for they are variously named and described, on account of their different operations; but in fact there is only one deity, the Great Soul (Mahan Atmâ). He is called the Sun, for he is the soul of all beings; and that is declared by the sage: 'The sun is the soul of what moves and of that which is fixed.' Other deities are portions of him, and that is expressly declared by the text. The wise call it Indra, Mitra, Varuna, etc.'

The entire universe is depicted in the Vedas as an emanation from God and as a part of Him. Every created thing is pervaded by His presence. In the Rig-Veda the prevalent doctrine seems to be that God simply pervades every created thing; but in the Yajur-Veda the doctrine seems to be implied that God actually assumes different forms; that every created thing is not merely pervaded by God, but is actually a part of God. The history of the creation as told severally in the Rig-Veda and Yajur-Veda is so curious and interesting, besides setting forth very clearly their pantheistic interpretations of God and the universe, that we cannot do better than quote first the

account given by the Rig-Veda and afterwards that given by the Yajur-Veda.

That portion of the Rig-Veda which is devoted to the history of the creation is called 'The Aiteraya Aranya.'[1]

Originally this universe was, indeed, SOUL only; nothing else whatever existed, active or inactive. HE thought, 'I will create worlds.' Thus HE created these various worlds: water, light, mortal beings, and the waters. That 'water' is the region above the heaven, which heaven upholds; the atmosphere comprises light; the earth is mortal; and the regions below are the 'waters.' HE thought, 'These are indeed worlds; I will create guardians of worlds.' Thus HE drew from the waters and framed an embodied being. He viewed him; and of that being so contemplated the mouth opened as an egg; from the mouth speech issued; from speech fire proceeded. The nostrils spread; from the nostrils breath passed; from breath air was propagated. The eyes opened; from the eyes a glance sprang; from that glance the sun was produced. The ears dilated; from the ears came hearkening, and from that the regions of space. The skin expanded; from the skin hair arose, from that grew herbs and trees. The breast opened; from the breast mind issued, and from mind the moon. The navel burst; from the navel came deglutition, from that death. The generative organ burst; thence flowed productive seed, whence waters drew their origin.

These deities being thus framed fell into this vast ocean, and to HIM they came with thirst and hunger, and HIM they thus addressed: 'Give us a smaller size, wherein abiding we may eat food.' He offered to them the form of a cow. They said, 'That is not sufficient for us.' He exhibited to them the form of a horse. They said, 'Neither

[1] In this account of the creation I have, both in the account given by the Rig-Veda as well as that by Yajur-Veda, made use of the translation given by the eminent scholar H. T. Colebrooke, which I have quoted almost verbatim.

is that sufficient for us.' He showed them the human form; they exclaimed, 'Well done! ah! wonderful!' Therefore man alone is pronounced to be well formed. He bade them occupy their respective places. Fire, becoming speech, entered the mouth. Air, becoming breath, proceeded to the nostrils. The sun, becoming sight, penetrated the eyes. Space became hearing, and occupied the ears. Herbs and trees became hair, and filled the skin. The moon, becoming mind, entered the breast. Death, becoming deglutition, penetrated the navel; and water became productive seed, and occupied the generative organ.

Hunger and thirst addressed Him, saying, 'Assign us to our places.' He replied, 'You I distribute among these deities, and I make you participant with them.' Therefore is it that, to whatever deity an oblation is offered, hunger and thirst participate with him. He reflected, 'These are worlds, and regents of worlds; for them I will frame food.' He viewed the waters; from waters so contemplated form issued; and food is form which was so produced.

Being thus framed, it turned away and sought to flee. The primeval man endeavoured to seize it by speech, but could not attain it by his voice: had he by voice taken it, hunger would be satisfied by naming food. He attempted to catch it by his breath, but could not inhale it by breathing: had he by inhaling taken it, hunger would be satisfied by smelling food. He sought to snatch it by a glance, but could not surprise it by a look: had he seized it by the sight, hunger would be satisfied by seeing food. He endeavoured to seize it by his skin, but could not restrain it by his touch: had he seized it by contact, hunger would be satisfied by touching food. He wished to reach it by the mind, but could not attain it by thinking: had he caught it by thought, hunger would be satisfied by meditating on food. He wanted to seize it by the generative organ, but could not so hold it: had he thus seized it,

hunger would be satisfied by emission. Lastly, he endeavoured to catch it by deglutition, and thus he did swallow it; that air which is so drawn in seizes food, and that very air is the bond of life.

HE, the Universal Soul, reflected, 'How can this body exist without me? HE considered by which extremity he should penetrate. HE thought, 'If without me speech discourse, breath inhale, and sight view; if hearing hear, skin feel, and mind meditate; if deglutition swallow, and the organ of generation perform its functions, then who am I?'

Parting the suture (*Síman*) He penetrated by this route. That opening is called the suture (*Vídríti*), and is the road to beatitude (*Nándana*).

Of that soul the places of recreation are three, and the modes of sleep as many. The right eye is a place of recreation. The throat is a situation of enjoyment. The heart is a region of delight.

Thus born, as the animating spirit, he discriminated the elements, remarking, 'What else but Him can I affirm to exist?' And he contemplated this thinking Person, the Vast Expanse, the Brâhma or Great One, and exclaimed: IT have I seen, therefore is HE named IT-SEEING (IDAM-DRA).' It-Seeing is indeed his name: and Him, being It-Seeing, they call by a remote appellation, Indra; for the gods generally delight in the concealment of their name. The gods delight in privacy.

This living principle is first in man a fetus or productive seed, which is the essence drawn from all the members of the body. Thus the man nourishes himself within himself. But when he emits it into woman he procreates that fetus; and such is its first birth.

It becomes identified with the woman; and being such as is her own body, it does not destroy her. She cherishes his own self thus received within her; and as nurturing him, she ought to be cherished by him. The woman

nourishes that fetus, but he previously cherished the child, and further does so after its birth. Since he supports the child before and after birth, he cherishes himself, and that for the perpetual succession of persons; for thus are these persons perpetuated. Such is his second birth.

This second self becomes his representative for holy acts of religion; and that other self, having fulfilled its obligations and completed its period of life, deceases. Departing hence, he is born again in some other shape; and such is his third birth.

This was declared by the holy sage: 'Within the womb I have recognised all the successive births of these deities. A hundred bodies like iron chains hold me down; yet like a falcon I swiftly rise.' Thus spake Vamadeva reposing in the womb; and possessing this intuitive knowledge, he rose after bursting that corporeal confinement, and, ascending to the blissful region of heaven, he attained every wish and became immortal. He became immortal.

What is this soul that we may worship him? Which is the soul? Is it that by which a man sees? Is it that by which he hears, by which he smells odours, by which he utters speech, by which he discriminates a pleasant or unpleasant taste? Is it the heart or understanding? Is it the mind or will? Is it sensation, or power, or discrimination, or perception? Is it attention, or application, or memory? Is it animal action, or wish, or desire?

All these are only various names of apprehension; but the soul consisting in the faculty of apprehension is Brâhma; he is Indra. He is Prajapati, the lord of creatures; these gods are He, and so are the five primary elements, earth, air, the ethereal fluid, water, and light. These and the same joined with minute objects and other seeds of existence, and again other beings produced from eggs, or born in wombs, or originating in hot moisture, or springing from plants, whether horses or kine, or men, or elephants, whatever lives and walks and flies, or whatever is immovable,

as herbs and trees, all is the eye of intelligence. On intellect everything is founded: the world is the eye of intellect, and intellect is its foundation. Intelligence is Brâhma, the Great One.

By this intuitively intelligent soul that sage ascended from the present world to the blissful region of heaven; and obtaining all his wishes, became immortal. He became immortal.

'May my speech be founded on understanding, and my mind be attentive to my utterance. Be thou manifested to me, O self-manifested intellect! For my sake, O speech and mind, approach this Veda. May what I have heard be unforgotten, day and night may I behold this which I have studied. Let me think the reality: let me speak the truth. May it preserve me; may it preserve the teacher: me may it preserve: may it preserve the teacher.'

Such is the history of the creation as given in the Aiteraya Aranya.

It may assist the reader in his better comprehension of it if he is reminded that Brâhma has been used here in the masculine gender, and denotes, according to commentators, the intelligent spirit whose birth was in the mundane egg. Indra is the chief of the gods or subordinate deities, meaning the elements and planets. Prajapati is the first embodied spirit, called Viraj, and described in the preceding part of the extract; the gods are fire, air, water, etc.; but the pervading principle of Indra, Brâhma, Prajapati, deities and men, is the Great Soul of all: that which has been previously described as Âtman, or Self.

The account given of the creation in the Yajur-Veda seems to me to be very inferior to that given in the Rig-Veda. In reading it we feel more amusement than real interest. The extract Mr. Colebrooke has given, however, is very short; and as it tends, moreover, to show us very clearly how completely the Hindus identified God with the Universe, how entirely they believed each created

thing, animate or inanimate, proceeded from God, it may not be out of place to insert the short account of the creation here.

Looking round, the primeval being saw nothing but himself; and he first said, 'I am I.' Therefore his name was 'I'; and thence even now, when called, a man first answers, 'It is I,' and then declares any other name which appertains to him.

Since he, being anterior to all that seeks supremacy, did by fire consume all obstacles to his own supremacy, therefore does the man who knows this truth overcome him who seeks to be before him.

He felt dread; and therefore man fears when alone. But he reflected, 'Since nothing exists besides myself, why should I fear?' Thus his terror departed from him; for what should he dread, since fear must be of another?

He felt not delight; and therefore man delights not alone. He wished the existence of another, and instantly he became such as is man and woman in mutual embrace. He caused this his own self to fall in twain, and thus became a husband and wife. Therefore was this body so separated, as it were an imperfect moiety of himself. This blank is, therefore, completed by woman. He approached her, and thence were human beings produced.

She reflected doubtingly, 'How can he, having produced me from himself, incestuously approach me? I will now assume a disguise.' She became a cow, and the other became a bull, and approached her; and the issue were kine. She was changed into a mare and he into a stallion; one was turned into a female ass and the other into a male one: thus did he again approach her, and the one-hoofed kind was the offspring. She became a female goat and he a male one; she was an ewe and he a ram: thus he approached her, and goats and sheep were the progeny. In this manner did he create every existing pair whatsoever, even to the ants and minutest insects.

Such is the short account given of the creation in the Yajur-Veda. Every created thing is here depicted as proceeding from the primeval being, who must not be mistaken for Âtman. He is Prajapati, or Viraj, and is created and pervaded by Âtman, but is not Âtman itself.

This account of the creation is manifestly inferior to the preceding. Indeed, upon considering it carefully I am not sure that it does not take away from the purity of the general conception of God, for it seems to raise this primeval being to the dignity of Creator; it seems almost to imply that the primeval being was the creation of Âtman, but that the whole of life was an emanation from Prajapati.

As far as my reading of the Vedas has gone, it appears to me that the three later Vedas are greatly inferior in conception to the Rig-Veda, and we will, therefore, in the remaining portion of this chapter confine ourselves for the most part to the Rig-Veda. In the portion of the Yajur-Veda, however, called the Black Yajur-Veda there is an extract given by Mr. Colebrooke quite worthy of the Rig-Veda itself, and displaying the same power of spiritual conception that the majority of the Rig-Veda hymns display:—

'Bhrigu, the offspring of Varuna, approached his father, saying, "Venerable father! make known to me Brâhma."[1] Varuna propounded these: namely, food or body, truth or life, sight, hearing, mind, or thought, and speech, and thus proceeded: "That whence all beings are produced, that by which they live when born, that towards which they tend, and that into which they pass do thou seek, for that is Brâhma."

'He meditated in devout contemplation; and having thought profoundly, he recognised food or body to be

[1] I imagine that throughout the whole of this ancedote 'Brâhma' is used in the neuter, and in reality signifies Âtman, or the Universal Soul.

Brâhma, for all beings are indeed produced from food; when born they live by food, towards food they tend, they pass into food. This he comprehended; but yet unsatisfied, he again approached his father Varuna, saying, "Venerable father! make known to me Brâhma." Varuna replied, "Seek the knowledge of Brâhma by devout meditation: Brâhma is profound contemplation."

'Having deeply meditated, he discovered breath or life to be Brâhma; for all beings are indeed produced from breath; when born they live by breath, towards breath they tend, they pass into breath. This he understood, but he again approached his father Varuna, saying, "Venerable father! make known to me Brâhma." Varuna replied, "Seek him by profound meditation: Brâhma is that."

'He meditated in deep contemplation, and discovered Intellect to be Brâhma, for all these beings are indeed produced from intellect; when born they live by intellect; towards intellect they tend; and they pass into intellect. This he understood; but again he came to his father Varuna, saying, "Venerable father! make known to me Brâhma." Varuna replied, "Inquire by devout contemplation: profound meditation is Brâhma."

'He thought deeply; and having thus meditated with devout contemplation, he knew Ananda or Felicity to be Brâhma, for all these beings are indeed produced from pleasure; when born they live by joy; they tend towards happiness; they pass into felicity.

'Such is the science which was attained by Bhrigu, taught by Varuna and founded on the supreme Ethereal Spirit. He who knows this rests on the same support, is endowed with abundant food, and becomes a blazing fire, which consumes food; great is he by progeny, by cattle, and by holy perfections, and great by propitious celebrity.' [1]

[1] Colebrooke's 'Miscellaneous Essays,' vol. i. pp. 69–70.

That habit, common in more or less degree with all the Vedas, of occasionally using the word Brâhma in the neuter sense, or as implying Âtman, or Universal Soul of all things, and again of using it in the masculine sense, and implying thereby one of the deities, is not a little confusing. In the above extract, however, I think there can be no doubt that Brâhma is used in the neuter and signifies the Universal Soul, the first principle of all things.

In the following benediction or salutation, taken from the same Black Yajur-Veda, Brâhma is evidently used in the neuter, and signifies the pervading Spirit of all creation:

'May Mitra, who presides over the day; Varuna, who governs the night; Aryam, the regent of sun and of sight; Indra, who gives strength; Vrihaspati, who rules the speech and understanding; and Vishnu, whose step is vast, grant us ease. I bow to Brâhma. Salutation unto thee, O Air! Even thou art Brâhma present to our apprehension. Thee I will call "present Brahma." Thee I will name "the right one," thee I will pronounce "the true one." May that universal Brâhma preserve me; may that preserve the teacher; propitious be it.'

There is another name occurring in the Rig-Veda theology of nearly as abstract a signification as Âtman: Aditi, the Infinite. The only superiority Âtman has over Aditi is that Âtman is never personified, always remaining free from myths, whereas Aditi receives a number of forms and symbolical meanings.

'Aditi,' says Max Müller,[1] in his translation of the Rig-Veda, 'Aditi, an ancient god or goddess, is in reality the earliest name invented to express the Infinite, not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky. That was called A-diti, the unbound, the un-

[1] 'Rig-Veda Sanhita, p. 230.

bounded; one might almost say, but for fear of misunderstandings, the Absolute, for it is derived from *diti*, bond, and the negative particle, and meant, therefore, originally what is free from bonds of any kind, whether of space or time—free from physical weakness, free from moral guilt. . . . The idea of the Infinite was most powerfully impressed on the awakening mind by the East. It is impossible to enter fully into all the thoughts and feelings that passed through the minds of the early poets when they formed names for that far, far East from whence even the early dawn, the sun, the day, their own life, seemed to spring. A new life flashed up every morning before their eyes, and the fresh breezes of the dawn reached them like greetings from the distant lands beyond the mountains, beyond the clouds, beyond the dawn, beyond "the immortal sea which brought us hither." The dawn seemed to them to open golden gates for the sun to pass in triumph, and while those gates were open their eyes and their mind strove in their childish way to pierce beyond the limits of this finite world. That silent aspect awakened in the human mind the conception of the Infinite, the Immortal, the Divine. Aditi is the name for that far-distant East, but Aditi is more than the dawn: Aditi is beyond the dawn, and in one place the dawn is called "the face of Aditi." Thus we read:—

'"Mitra and Varuna, you mount your chariot which is golden, when the dawn bursts forth, and has iron poles at the setting of the sun: from thence you see Aditi and Diti, what is yonder and what is here."'

It is not difficult to understand why this word 'Aditi' should have become so quickly symbolised, and endowed with so many different meanings. We have but to recall the number of natural objects that to the naked eye would come under the denomination of the 'visibly infinite.' The sky, the air, the earth, all seem to stretch so far that the eye is unable to discover any termination. Aditi originally

and in her cosmic character, meaning the beyond, the unbounded realm beyond earth, sky, and heaven, meaning something quite distinct from the sky or the ocean, gradually comes to be identified with each and all of them. Thus we read :—

'Aditi is the heaven, Aditi the sky, Aditi the mother, the father, the son. All the gods are Aditi, the five clans, the past is Aditi, Aditi is the future.'

Soon, however, the same mental process which led on later speculators from the earth to the elephant, and from the elephant to the tortoise, led the Vedic poets to something beyond Aditi the Infinite. There was something beyond that Infinite which for a time they had grasped by the name of Aditi, and, whether intentionally or by a mere accident of language, they called 'dákshâ,' literally power or the powerful. Thus we read : 'Dáksha was born of Aditi, and Aditi was born of Dáksha.' In this there is the same mental perplexity exhibited as there is in the account given of the creation in the Aiteraya Aranya: 'The skin expanded, from the skin hair arose, from that grew herbs and trees ; the breast opened, from the breast mind issued, and from mind the moon.' Immediately afterwards reading : 'Herbs and trees became hair and filled the skin ; the moon becoming mind entered the breast,' etc. In their endeavour to grasp the first cause of all things they become mystical, perhaps a little inconsistent and incomprehensible, unless it be that they wish to imply that the entire universe consists in a perpetual absorption and re-absorption ; as one object being an emanation from another object, only to be quickly re-absorbed in it. At last even Dákshâ does not sufficiently interpret the fulness of their conception. There is something even beyond Dákshâ : Not-being and Being are in the highest heaven, in the birthplace of Dákshâ, in the lap of Aditi.

Gradually Aditi comes to represent a moral phase. This, too, is not difficult to comprehend. Sin in the Veda

is frequently conceived as a bond or a chain from which the repentant sinner wishes to be freed. Aditi-tva, Aditi-hood, means freedom from bonds, from anything that hinders the proper performance of a religious act. Aditi-tva, meaning freedom from sin, gradually comes to mean Aditi perfect goodness or holiness. Seven of the gods are conceived of as the sons of Aditi, and are called the Âdityas. Thus in the performance of a sacrifice they make use of the following invocation: 'May we obtain the new favour of the Âdityas, their best protection; may the quick Maruts (the storm gods) listen and place this sacrifice in guiltlessness and Aditi-hood.' The ideas of Being and Not-being are familiar to the Hindus from a very early period of their intellectual growth; in fact, from these ideas of Being and Not-being gradually arose a sort of theogony. One of their poets speaks thus:—

1. 'Let us now with praise proclaim the births of the gods, that a man may see them in a future age, whenever these hymns are sung.'

2. 'Brahmanaspati (the lord of prayer) blew them together like a smith with his bellows; in a former age of the gods Being was born from Not-being.'

3. 'In the first age of the gods Being was born from Not-being; after it were born the Regions; from them Uttânapada.'

4. 'From Uttânapada the Earth was born, the Regions were born from the Earth. Daksha was born of Aditi, and Aditi from Daksha.'

Soon Aditi grows to be an adjective, and in this form is applied to various of the deities. Thus we read: 'Agni, the Aditi, the freest among all the gods; he is the guest among all men.'

Another word of Pantheistic signification is *Vách*, the literal interpretation of which is Speech, its full meaning being, however, the active power which proceeds from Brâhma. Near the close of the tenth chapter of the

Rig-Veda is a hymn supposed to be spoken by *Vach* in praise of herself as the supreme universal soul :—

'I range with the *Rudras*, with the *Vasus*, with the Adityas, and with the *Viśwedevas*. I uphold both the sun and the ocean, the firmament, fire, and both the Aswins. I support the moon-destroyer of foes. I grant wealth to the honest votary who performs sacrifices, offers oblations, and satisfies the deities. Me, who am the queen, the conferrer of wealth, the possessor of knowledge, and first of such as merit worship, the gods render, universally, present everywhere, and pervader of all beings. He who eats food through me, as he who sees, who breathes, or who hears through me, yet knows me not, is lost ; hear, then, the faith that I pronounce. Even I declare this self, who is worshipped by gods and men ; I make strong whom I choose ; I make him *Brâhma*, holy and wise. I pervade heaven and earth, and my origin is in the midst of the ocean ; and therefore do I pervade all beings, and touch this heaven with my form. Originating all beings, I pass like the breeze. I am above this heaven, beyond this earth ; and what is the great one that am I.'

Thus we perceive throughout the Rig-Veda that though to the superficial reader there is an apparent invocation to various deities, in reality it is one and the same deity which is invoked under different names ; that deity being for the most part not an isolated anthropomorphic person, but a subtle pervading Presence disclosing itself under different forms, now of the storms, now of fire, the air or sun or ocean, then again of Intelligence, but principally and chiefly as the Unbounded, the Infinite, Self, or the Universal Soul of all things.

CHAPTER II.

BRAHMANISM.

THOUGH we have, owing to the great antiquity of the Hindu nation, been unable to trace the progress of the Hindu religion from its age of earliest infancy up to its age of ripeness and maturity, we are yet able to trace it from its age of maturity to its gradual decline and old age.

From the extracts we have given in the previous chapter of the Vedas it has been fully shown how spiritual, and, at times, how even sublime was the ancient Hindu conception of the God as portrayed, for instance, in the Rig-Veda. But in this chapter we have to relate how that conception became lowered, and how the religion became gradually paganised and perverted.

We shall devote this chapter principally to a relation of the various forms and ceremonies inculcated by the Brahmanic priesthood. We shall detail how the spiritual form of the Vedas became slowly obliterated by the ceremonial; how the purity of the religion became gradually contaminated and rendered foul by the unlimited trust placed in the priest; how the conscience became stifled by the belief in the efficacy of oblations and sacrifices as an expiation and atonement for sins; and how the singular purity and intelligence of the Hindu conception of a God became degraded and rendered ridiculous by the increasing trivialities and extravagances of the ritual, and by the attention bestowed upon the minutest details of form and ceremony.

It is true that here and there in scattered passages we find a faint foreshadowing of these superstitious practices in the Rig-Veda, but the instances are few and far between. A much larger proportion are to be found in the three later Vedas; and a still greater number, perhaps, take their risè from the Institutes of Manu.

Like the Vedas, the Institutes of Manu betray a very gradual origin. As far as we can tell an interval of some 1,500 or 2,000 years must have elapsed between the composition of the first Veda and the culminating period of religious Hindu degradation. The schism of Buddha arose about the fifth or sixth century before Christ; and the origin of that schism may be almost entirely traced to the intellectual antagonism experienced by the more philosophical minds against the mummeries and absurdities of the then existing state of Hindu religion. To the same cause also may be traced the heresy of Zoroaster. Humanly speaking, if there had been no contamination, no degradation of the purity of the doctrines taught in the Rig-Veda, the two great religions of Zoroaster and Buddha would never have come into existence, any more than Protestantism would have come into existence if Christianity had not previously been perverted by the paganising influence of mediæval Catholicism. The religion of Zoroaster arose as a moral protest against the growing and increasing immorality of the Brahmanic priesthood, the purer minds resenting the doctrine which could teach that sins may be atoned and expiated by offerings and oblations. The religion of Buddha arose as an intellectual protest against the degrading and enervating superstitions that were gradually threatening to take the place of all that was most holy and sublime in the ancient Hindu religion.

It must not, of course, be imagined that the degradation was entire and complete. Occasionally in the laws of Manu we may come across passages quite worthy of the Rig-Veda. In many parts we are struck by the wonderful

abstraction and conception of the Pantheistic purity of their ideas. Yet the very loftiness of some of their expressions renders us all the more astonished at the utter absurdity of the actions that accompany such expressions. We can only imagine that the author of the language was not the same as the inventor of the trivial and at times even ludicrous genuflexions that were a parody and satire upon the sublimity of the language itself, but must have lived in an earlier and purer age.

We must proceed, however, without further digression to the consideration of the forms and ceremonies practised by the Hindus. But before doing this I wish to state how much of the information contained in this chapter has been gained from the late Mr. Colebrooke's very interesting essays on 'The Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus.' Occasionally I have quoted from him quite verbatim, but for the most part I have so condensed what he has written (compressing, indeed, his three or four essays into this one chapter), taking a few incidents from one page and a few incidents from another, that it is almost impossible to give the usual footnote references. I must, therefore, content myself with acknowledging in general terms my obligation to him, without citing those obligations more particularly.

The Institutes of Manu prescribe regulations for the duty of every man, in whatever station of life, from the moment of birth to the moment of death, from the hour he rises in the morning to the hour he sinks to rest at night. A Brâhmana rising from sleep is enjoined, under the penalty of losing the benefit of all rites performed by him, to rub his teeth with a proper withe or twig of a particular kind of figtree, pronouncing to himself this prayer: 'Attend, lord of the forest; Soma, king of herbs and plants, has approached thee: mayest thou and he cleanse my mouth with glory and good auspices, that I may eat abundant food.' But if a proper withe cannot be found, or on certain days when the use of it is forbidden (as is the case on the

first, sixth, and ninth days of each lunar fortnight) he must rinse his mouth twelve times with water. Having thrown carefully away the twig which has been used, he should proceed to bathe in a river or other water. The duty of bathing in the morning and in the noon, if the man be a householder, and in the evening also, if he belong to a religious order, is considered of the greatest importance. The regular bath consists of ablutions followed by worship and by the inaudible recitation of the Gáyatrí. Immediately after the ablution he should sip water without swallowing it, silently praying or uttering inaudibly the mysterious names of the seven worlds. Thrice plunging into water, he must repeat the expiatory text which recites the creation; and having thus completed his ablution, he puts on his mantle after washing it, and proceeds to worship the rising sun.

This ceremony is begun by his tying the lock of hair on the crown of his head, while he recites the Gáyatrí, holding much *kusa* grass in his left and three blades of the same grass in his right hand. Thrice he has to sip water with the same text preceded by the mysterious naming of worlds, and each time rub his hands as if washing them; finally he has to touch with his wet hand his feet, head, breast, nose, and navel, and again sip water three times. If he happen to sneeze or spit he must not immediately sip water, but first touch his right ear, in compliance with the maxim, 'After sneezing, spitting, blowing his nose, sleeping, putting on apparel, dropping tears, a man should not immediately sip water, but first touch his right ear.' 'Fire, water, the Vedas, the sun, moon, and air,' says Parasara, 'all reside in the right ears of Bráhmanas, *Gangá* is in their right ears, sacrificial fire in their nostrils; at the moment when both are touched impurity vanishes.' The sipping of water is a necessary introduction of all rites; without it all acts of religion are vain. Having, therefore, sipped water and recited the prayer, 'May the

waters preserve me,' the priest closes his eyes and meditates in silence, figuring to himself that 'Brâhma,' with four faces and a red complexion, resides in his navel; Vishnu, with four arms and a black complexion, in his heart; and Śiva, with five faces and a white complexion, in his forehead. The priest afterwards meditates the holiest of texts with three suppressions of breath. Closing the left nostril with the two longest fingers of his right hand, he draws his breath through the right nostril, and then closing that nostril with his thumb, he holds his breath while he meditates the text. A suppression of breath is held to imply the following meditation: '*Om*! Earth! Sky! Heaven! Middle Region! Place of Births! Mansion of the Blest! Abode of Truth! We meditate on the adorable light of the resplendent generator which governs our intellects; which is water, lustre, savour, immortal faculty of thought, Brâhma, earth, sky, and heaven.'

A Brahmana beginning and ending a lecture of the Veda or the recital of any holy strain must, by the express injunction of Manu, always pronounce to himself the syllable *Om*. 'For unless the syllable *Om* precede his learning will slip away from him, and unless it follow nothing will be long retained.' And again Manu says: 'All rites ordained in the Veda, oblations to fire, and solemn sacrifices pass away; but that which passeth not away is declared to be the syllable *Om*, thence called *akshara*, since it is a symbol of God, the lord of created beings.'

In the midst of all this folly their reasons for the worship of the sun manifest nearly as much purity of conception as is manifested in some of the most spiritual Rig-Veda hymns. There is a concluding prayer to teach the various manifestations of that light, which is the sun himself. 'The sun,' says one of their writers, 'is Brâhma; there is none greater than he, nor has been, nor will be; therefore he is celebrated as the supreme soul in all the Vedas.' That greatest of lights which exists in the sun

exists also as the principle of life in the hearts of all beings. It shines externally in the sky, internally in the heart; it is found in fire and flame. This principle of life, which is acknowledged by the virtuous as existing in the heart and in the sky, shines externally in the ethereal region, manifested in the form of the sun. It is also made apparent in the form of lustre of gems, stones, and metals; and in the taste of trees, plants, and herbs. That is, the irradiating being who is a form of Brâhma is manifested in all moving beings by their locomotion; and in some fixed substances by their lustre; and in others, such as plants and herbs, by their savour. Everything which moves or which is fixed is pervaded by that light, which in all moving things exists as the supreme soul, and as the immortal thinking faculty of beings which have the power of motion. 'God is the imperishable being residing in the sacred abode: the thinking soul is light alone: it shines with unborrowed splendour.' This thinking soul called the immortal principle is a manifestation of that irradiating power who is the supreme soul.

This universe, consisting of three worlds, was produced from water. 'He first with a thought,' says Manu, 'created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed.' Water, which is the element whence the three worlds proceeded, is that light which is the efficient cause of creation, duration, and destruction, manifested with these powers, in the form of Brâhma, Vishnu, and Rudra; to denote this 'earth, sky and heaven' are subjoined as epithets of light. In one of the writings *Krishna* is made to say, 'The sun is the god of perception, the eye of the universe, the cause of day; there is none greater than he among the immortal powers. From him this universe proceeded, and in him it will reach annihilation: he is time measured by instants.'

It is evident from the extracts we have given that the Hindus when worshipping the sun did not worship the round globe we denominate by that name, but the light,

which enlightens all mankind—the irradiating Principle of the Universe.

After a great many more preliminary ceremonies the Brahmána proceeds to worship the sun, which he does by standing on one foot, and resting the other against his ankle or heel, looking towards the east, and holding his hands open before him in a hollow form. In this posture he pronounces to himself the following prayers: 1st. 'The rays of light announce the splendid fiery sun, beautifully rising to illumine the universe.' 2nd. 'He rises, wonderful, the eye of the sun, of water, and of fire, collective power of gods; he fills heaven, earth, sky with his luminous net; he is the soul of all which is fixed and locomotive.' 3rd. 'That eye, supremely beneficial, rises pure from the east; may we see him a hundred years, may we live a hundred years, may we hear a hundred years.' 4th. 'May we, preserved by divine power, contemplating heaven above the region of darkness, approach the deity, most splendid of luminaries.' The following prayer may be also subjoined: 'Thou art self-existent, thou art the most excellent ray; thou givest effulgence: grant it unto me.' After presenting an oblation to the sun in the mode forthwith to be explained, the Gáyatrí must be next invoked in these words: 'Thou art light, thou art seed, thou art immortal life; thou art called effulgent: beloved by the gods, defamed by none, thou art the holiest sacrifice.' The text has then to be repeated in prescribed forms, and is afterwards invoked thus: 'Divine Text, who dost grant our best wishes, whose name is Trysyllable, whose import is the power of the Supreme Being; come, thou mother of the Vedas, who didst spring from Brâhma, be constant here.' The Gáyatrí is then pronounced inaudibly with the triliteral monosyllable and the names of the three lower worlds a hundred or a thousand times, as often as may be practicable, counting the repetitions on a rosary of gems set in gold or of wild grains. The oblation above mentioned, and which

is called *argha*, consists of *tila*, flowers, barley, water, and red sandus-wood, in a clean copper-vessel, made in the shape of a boat; this the priest places on his head, and thus presents it with the following text: 'He who travels the appointed path (viz., the sun) is present in that pure orb of fire, and in the ethereal region; he is the sacrifice at religious rites, and he sits in the sacred close, never remaining a single day in the same spot; yet present in every house, in the heart of every human being, in the most holy mansion, in the subtile ether; produced in water, in earth, in the abode of truth, and in the stony mountains, he is that which is both minute and vast.' This text is explained as signifying that the sun is a manifestation of the Supreme Being, present everywhere, produced everywhere, pervading every place and thing. The oblation is concluded by worshipping the sun with the subjoined text: 'His rays, the efficient causes of knowledge, irradiating worlds, appear like sacrificial fires.'

There are a quantity of minute regulations set down regarding the conduct of a Hindu all through the day: how often he is to wash, what sort of food he may eat, with whom he may eat, with whom he may *not* eat (among whom is his own wife), the posture in which when eating he should sit, the quarter towards which he ought to look, and the precautions he ought to take to insulate himself as it were during his meal lest he be contaminated by the touch of some undetected sinner who may be present. But these minute details are so trivial and so uninteresting that, for fear of wearying the reader, as well as for the sake of space, we will leave them and proceed to describe the marriage ceremonies.

The marriage ceremony opens with the solemn reception of the bridegroom by the father of the bride. Having previously performed the obsequies of ancestors, as is usual upon any access of good fortune, the father of the bride sits down to await the bridegroom's arrival in an apartment at

the time chosen for it and prepared according to the rules of astrology. The jewels and other presents intended for him are placed then; a cow is tied on the northern side of the apartment, and a stool or cushion and other furniture for the reception of the guest are arranged in order. On his approach the bride's father rises to welcome him and recites the following prayer while the bridegroom stands before him: 'May she who supplies oblations for religious worship, who constantly follows her calf, and who was the milch cow when Yama was the votary, abound with milk and fulfil our wishes year after year.' This prayer is seemingly intended for the consecration of the cow, which is let loose in a subsequent stage of the ceremony, instead of slaying her, as appears to have been anciently the custom. This consecration of a cow is always considered as a sort of compliment to be paid to any guest whom the host wishes to honour with more than an ordinary reception. After the prayer above mentioned has been finished, the bridegroom sits down on a stool or cushion which is presented to him. He first recites a text of the Yajur-Veda: 'I step on this for the sake of food and other benefits, on this variously splendid footstool.' The bride's father then presents to him a cushion made of twenty leaves of *kusa* grass, holding it up with both hands, exclaiming, 'The cushion! the cushion! the cushion!' The bridegroom replies, 'I accept the cushion,' and, taking it, places it on the ground under his feet while he recites the following prayer: 'May those plants over which Soma presides, and which are variously dispersed on the earth, incessantly grant me happiness while this cushion is placed under my feet.' The bride's father then offers a vessel of water, thrice exclaiming, 'Water for ablutions!' The bridegroom declares his acceptance of it and looks into the vessel, saying, 'Generous water! I view thee; return in the form of fertilising rain from him from whom thou dost proceed.' The bridegroom then takes up water in the palms of both hands

joined together and throws it on his left foot, saying, 'I wash my left foot and fix prosperity in this realm.' He also throws water on the other foot, saying, 'I wash my right foot and introduce prosperity into this realm.' And he then throws water on both feet, saying, 'I wash first one and then the other, and lastly both feet, that the realm may thrive and intrepidity be gained.' A vessel of water is then offered by the bride's father, who thrice exclaims, 'Take water to be sipped.' The bridegroom accepts it, saying, 'Thou art glorious; grant me glory.' The bride's father next fills a vessel with honey, curds, and clarified butter; he covers it with another vessel and presents it to the bridegroom, who accepts it, places it on the ground, and looks into it, saying, 'Thou art glorious; may I become so.' He tastes the food three times, saying very nearly the same words, and then silently eats until he be satisfied. After this he sips water and touches his mouth and other parts of his body with his hand, saying, 'May there be speech in my mouth, breath in my nostrils, sight in my eyeballs, hearing in my ears, strength in my arms, firmness in my thighs; may my limbs and members remain unhurt together with my soul.' Presents suitable to the rank of the parties are then given to the guest. The hospitable rites are concluded by letting loose the cow at the intercession of the guest.

While the bridegroom is being welcomed with these ceremonies, or more properly before his arrival, the bride bathes during the recital of the following texts. Three vessels of water are severally poured on her head, with three different prayers. 1st. 'Love! I know thy name. Thou art an intoxicating beverage. Bring the bridegroom happily. For thee was framed the inebriating draught. Fire! thy best origin is here. Through devotion wert thou created. May this oblation be efficacious.' 2nd. 'Damsel! I anoint this thy generative organ with honey, because it is the second mouth of the Creator; by that thou subduest all males, though unsubdued; by that thou art lively and dost

hold dominion. May this oblation be efficacious.' 3rd. 'May the primeval ruling sages, who framed the female organ, as a fire that consumeth flesh, and thereby framed a procreating juice, grant the prolific power that proceeds from the three-horned bull and from the sun. May this oblation be efficacious.'

The bride is then brought to the bridegroom; her hand is placed in his, both having been previously rubbed with some auspicious drug. A matron must bind both hands with *kusa* grass amidst the sound of cheerful music. The bride's father, bidding the attendant priests begin their acclamations, such as 'Happy day! auspicious be it! prosperity attend!' etc., takes a vessel of water containing *tila* and *kusa* grass and pours it on the hands of the bride and bridegroom, after uttering the words, '*Om, tat sat!*' ('God, the existent'); and after repeating at full length the names of the bride, of the bridegroom, and of himself he solemnly declares, 'I give unto thee this damsel adorned with jewels and protected by the Lord of creatures.' The bridegroom replies, 'Well be it!' The bride's father afterwards gives him a piece of gold, 'as a fee for the purpose of completing the solemn donation made by me.' The bridegroom again recites, 'Well be it!' and the following text: 'Who gave her? To whom did he give her? Love or free consent gave her. Love was the giver. Love was the taker. Love! may this be thine! With love may I enjoy her!'

Being thus affianced, the bride and bridegroom then walk forth, while he thus addresses her: 'May the regents of space, may air, the sun, and fire dispel that anxiety which thou feelest in thy mind and turn thy heart to me.' He proceeds thus while they look at each other: 'Be gentle in thy aspect, and loyal to thy husband; be fortunate in cattle, amiable in thy mind, and beautiful in thy person; be mother of valiant sons; be fond of delights; be cheerful, and bring prosperity to our bipeds and quadrupeds. First in a former birth Soma received thee; the sun next ob-

tained thee; in successive transmigrations the regent of fire was thy third husband: thy fourth is a human being. Soma gave her to the sun; the sun gave her to the regent of fire; fire gave her to me; with her he has given me wealth and male offspring. May she, a most auspicious cause of prosperity, never desert me,' etc. The bridegroom then presents the bride with a waist cloth and mantle; and the skirts of her mantle and his are tied together by the father of the bride, who pronounces while doing so these words: 'Ye must be inseparably united in matters of duty, wealth, and love.' Then the following ceremonies take place:—

'. The bridegroom goes to the principal apartment of the house, prepares a sacrificial fire in the usual mode, and hallows the implements of sacrifice. A friend of the bridegroom walks round the fire, bearing a jar of water, and stops on the south side of it; another does the same, and places himself on the right hand of the first. The bridegroom then casts four double handfuls of rice into a flat basket; near it he places a stone and muller, after formally touching them, and then, entering the house, he causes the bride to be clothed with a new waistcloth and scarf, while he recites the subjoined prayers: 'May those generous women who spun and wound the thread, and who wove the warp and weft of this cloth, generously clothe thee to old age, long-lived woman! Put on this raiment.' 'Clothe her, invest her with apparel, prolong her life to a great age. Mayest thou live a hundred years. As long as thou livest, amiable woman, preserve beauty and wealth.' Afterwards the following prayer is recited: 'May the assembled gods unite our hearts; may the waters unite them. May air unite us. May the Creator unite us. May the God of love unite us.' The bridegroom then passes from the bride's left side to her right and makes her join her hands in a hollow form. The rice which had been put in a basket is then taken up, and the stone is placed before the bride, who treads upon it with the point of her right foot, while the bridegroom recites this prayer: 'Ascend this stone; be firm like this

stone; distress my foe, and be not subservient to my enemies.' The bridegroom then pours a ladleful of clarified butter on her hands; another person gives her the rice, and two other ladlefuls of butter are poured over it. She then separates her hands, and lets the rice fall over the fire, while the following text is recited: 'This woman, casting the rice into the fire, says, "May my lord be long-lived, may we live a hundred years, and may all my business prosper; may this oblation be efficacious."' Afterwards the bridegroom walks round the fire preceded by the bride and reciting this text: 'The girl goes from her parents' abode to her husband's, having strictly observed abstinence for three days from factitious salt,' etc. The bride again steps on the stone and makes another oblation of rice while the subjoined prayer is recited: 'The damsel has worshipped the generous sun and the regent of fire. Damsel, by means of thee we repress foes like a stream of water. May the generous sun and regent of fire liberate her and me from this family; be this oblation efficacious.' The bridegroom then pours rice out of the basket into the fire, after pouring one or two ladlefuls of butter on the edge of the basket. With this offering he simply says, 'May this oblation to fire be efficacious.'

The reader would be wearied if we were to devote much more time to the immense number of prayers and oblations that follow. We therefore pass on to the next ceremony of any real importance. This consists of the bride stepping seven steps. It is the most material of all the nuptial rites, for the marriage is complete and irrevocable so soon as she has taken the seventh step, and not sooner. She is conducted by the bridegroom and directed by him to step successively into seven circles while the following texts are uttered: 1. 'May Vishnu cause thee to take one step for the sake of obtaining food.' 2. 'May Vishnu cause thee to take one step for the sake of obtaining strength.' 3. 'Three steps for the sake of solemn acts of religion.' 4.

'Four steps for the sake of obtaining happiness.' 5. 'Five steps for the sake of cattle.' 6. 'Six steps for the sake of increase of wealth.' 7. 'Seven steps for the sake of obtaining priests to perform sacrifices.' The bridegroom then addresses the bride: 'Having completed seven steps, be my companion. May I become thy associate; may none interrupt thy association with me; may such as are disposed to promote our happiness confirm thy association with me.' The bridegroom then addresses the spectators: 'This woman is auspicious; approach and view her; and having conferred auspicious fortune on her, depart to your respective abodes.'

Then the bridegroom's friend, who stood near the fire bearing a jar of water, advances to the spot where the seventh step was completed and pours water on the bridegroom's head and afterwards on the bride's, while this text is recited: 'May water and all the gods cleanse our hearts; may air do so; may the Creator do so; may the divine instructress unite our hearts.' Matrons then pour water mixed with leaves upon the bride and bridegroom, and the bridegroom again makes oblations with the names of the worlds by way of closing the ceremony.

During the three subsequent days the newly-married couple must abstain from factitious salt, must live chastely and austerely, and must sleep on the ground. On the following day—that is, on the fourth day exclusively—the bridegroom conducts the bride to his own house on a carriage or other suitable conveyance. Alighting from the carriage, the bridegroom leads the bride into the house, chanting a hymn. Matrons welcome the bride, and make her sit down on a bull's hide. Then the bridegroom recites this prayer: 'May kine produce her numerous young; may horses and human beings do so; and may the Deity sit here, by whose favour sacrifices are accomplished with gifts a thousandfold.'

The women then place a young child in the bride's lap;

they put roots of lotos or else fruit of different kinds in his hand.' The bridegroom takes up the child, and then prepares a sacrificial fire in the usual manner, and makes eight oblations, with the following prayers, preceded and followed with the usual oblations, to three worlds: 1. 'May there be cheerfulness here.' 2. 'May thine own kindred be kind here.' 3. 'May there be pleasure here with me.' 4. 'Sport thou here.' 5. 'May there be kindness here with me.' 6. 'May thine own kindred be benevolent towards me.' 7. 'May there be here delight towards me.' 8. 'Be thou joyous towards me.' The bride then salutes her father-in-law and the other relatives of her husband.

Afterwards the bridegroom prepares another sacrificial fire, and sits down with the bride on his right hand. The remainder of each ladleful is thrown into a jar of water, which is afterwards poured on the bride's head. Twenty oblations are then made and this prayer: 'Fire, expiator of evil! thou dost atone evils for the gods themselves. I, a priest, approach thee desirous of soliciting thee to remove any sinful taint in the beauty of this woman.' Similar adjurations are made to the air, moon and sun, and the ceremony is then considered as finally concluded.

From a description of the marriage ceremonies we pass to the description of the funeral rites.

A dying man, when no hopes of his surviving remain, should be laid upon a bed of *kuśa* grass, either in the house or out of it, if he be a Śúdra, but in the open air, if he belong to another tribe. When he is at the point of death donations of cattle, land, gold, silver, or other things, according to his ability, should be made by him; or if he be too weak by another person in his name. His head should be sprinkled with water from the Ganges and smeared with clay brought from the same river. A *śálagráma*[1] stone

[1] The 'śálagrámas' are black stones found in a part of the Gandakí river within the limits of Nepal. They are mostly round, and are commonly perforated in one or more places by worms, or, as the Hindus believe, by Vishnu

ought to be placed near the dying man; holy strains from the Veda or from sacred poems should be repeated aloud in his ears, and leaves of holy basil must be scattered over his head.

When he expires the corpse must be washed, perfumed, and decked with wreaths of flowers; a piece of tutanag, another of gold, a gem of any sort, and a piece of coral should be put into the mouth of the corpse, and pieces of gold in both nostrils, both eyes, and both ears. A cloth perfumed with fragrant oil must be thrown over the corpse, which the nearest relation of the deceased must then carry with modest deportment to some holy spot in the forest or near water. The corpse must be preceded by fire and by food carried in an unbaked earthen vessel. After washing the corpse, clothing it in clean apparel, and rubbing it with perfumes the relations of the deceased place the corpse with its head towards the north on the funeral pile, which is previously decorated with strung and unstrung flowers, the funeral pile having, of course, been previously most solemnly consecrated. A cloth must then be thrown over the corpse, and a relation of the deceased, taking up a lighted brand, must say, 'May the gods with flaming mouths burn this corpse!' He then walks thrice round the pile with his right hand towards it, and shifts the sacrificial cord to his right shoulder. Then, looking towards the south and dropping his left knee to the ground, he applies the fire to the pile near the head of the corpse, saying, '*Namo! Namah!*' while the attending priests recite a prayer.

in the shape of a reptile. According to the number of perforations and of spiral curves in each the stone is supposed to contain Vishnu in various characters. For example, such a stone perforated in one place only, with four spiral curves in the perforation, and with marks resembling a cow's feet and a long wreath of flowers, contains Lakshmí-Náráyana. In like manner stones are found in the Narmadá which are considered types of Siva, and are called Bánling. The śálagráma is found upon trial not to be calcareous; it strikes fire with steel, and scarcely at all effervesces with acids. (Note in Colebrooke's 'Miscellaneous Essays,' vol. i. p. 173.)

The fire must be so managed that some bones may remain for the subsequent ceremony of gathering the ashes. While the pile is burning the relations of the deceased take up seven pieces of wood a span long and cut them severally with an axe over the firebrands and then throw the pieces over their shoulders upon the fire, saying, 'Salutation to thee, who dost consume flesh!'

After the body of the deceased has been burnt in the mode above-mentioned all who have touched or followed the corpse must walk round the pile, keeping their left hands towards it, and taking care not to look at the fire. They then walk in procession according to seniority to a river or other running water, and after washing and again putting on their apparel they advance into the stream. They then ask the deceased's brother-in-law or some other person able to give the proper answer, 'Shall we present water?' If the deceased were a hundred years old the answer must be simply 'Do so'; but if he were not so aged the reply is, 'Do so, but do not repeat the oblation.' Upon this they all shift the sacerdotal string to the right shoulder, and looking towards the south, and being clad in a single garment, without a mantle, they stir the water with the ring-finger of the left hand, saying, 'Waters, purify us.' With the same finger of the right hand they throw up some water towards the south, and after plunging once under the surface of the river they rub themselves with their hands. An oblation of water must be next presented from the joined palms of the hands, naming the deceased and the family from whom he sprang, and saying, 'May this oblation reach thee.' If it be intended to show particular honour to the deceased, three offerings of water may be thus made. After finishing the usual libations of water to satisfy the manes of the deceased they quit the river, and shift their wet clothes for other apparel; they then sip water without swallowing it, and, sitting down on the soft turf, alleviate their sorrow by the recital of the following or other suitable

moral sentences, refraining at the same time from tears and lamentations :—

1. 'Foolish is he who seeks permanence in the human state, unsolid like the stem of the plantain tree, transient like the foam of the sea.'

2. 'When a body, formed of five elements to receive the reward of deeds done in its own former person, reverts to its five original principles what room is there for regret?'

3. 'The earth is perishable; the gods themselves pass away: how should not that bubble, mortal man, meet destruction?'

4. 'All that is low must finally perish; all that is elevated must ultimately fall; all compound bodies must end in dissolution, and life is concluded with death.'

5. 'Unwillingly do the manes of the deceased taste the tears and rheum shed by their kinsmen; then do not wail, but diligently perform the obsequies of the dead.'

At night, if the corpse were burnt by day, or in the daytime, if the ceremony were not completed until night, or in case of exigency whenever the priest approves, the nearest relation of the deceased takes up water in a new earthen jar and returns to the town, preceded by a person bearing a staff, and attended by the rest walking in procession, and led by the youngest. Going to the door of his own house or to a place of worship, or to some spot near water, he prepares the ground for the oblation of a funeral cake by raising a small altar of earth and marking lines on it, as practised for other oblations. Then, taking a brush of *kuśa* grass in his right hand, he washes therewith the ground, over which *kuśa* grass is spread, saying, 'Such a one (naming the deceased and the family from whom he sprang), may this oblation be acceptable to thee.' Next, making a ball of three handfuls of boiled rice mixed with *tila*, fruits of different sorts, honey, milk, butter, and similar things, such as sugar, roots, pot-herbs, etc., he presents it on the spot

he had purified, naming the deceased and saying, 'May this first funeral cake, which shall restore thy head, be acceptable to thee.' Again purifying the spot in the same manner as before, and with the same words addressed to the deceased, he silently puts fragrant flowers, resin, a lighted lamp, and other similar things on the funeral cake and presents a woollen yarn, naming the deceased and saying, 'May this apparel made of woollen yarn be acceptable to thee.'

In the evening of the same day water and milk must be suspended in earthen vessels before the door in honour of the deceased, with this address to him: 'Such a one deceased, bathe here; drink this'; and the same ceremony may be repeated every evening until the period of mourning expire. During ten days funeral cakes, together with libations of water and tila, must be offered, as on the first day; augmenting, however, the number each time, so that ten cakes be offered on the tenth day; and with this further difference, that the address varies each time. On the second day the prayer is: 'May this second cake, which shall restore thy eyes, ears, and nose, be acceptable to thee'; on the third day, 'May this third cake, which shall restore thy throat, arms, and breast, be acceptable to thee'; on the fourth, 'Thy navel and organs of excretion'; on the fifth, 'thy knees, legs, and feet'; on the sixth, 'all thy vitals'; on the seventh, 'all thy veins'; on the eighth, 'thy teeth, nails, and hair'; on the ninth, 'thy manly strength'; and on the tenth, 'May this tenth cake, which shall fully satisfy the hunger and thirst of thy renewed body, be acceptable to thee.' During this period a pebble wrapped up in a fragment of the deceased's shroud is worn by the heir suspended on his neck. To that pebble, as a type of the deceased, the funeral cakes are offered. The same vessel in which the first oblation was made must be used throughout the period of mourning; this vessel, therefore, is also carried about by the heir in the fragment of the shroud. Should either the vessel

or the pebble be lost by any accident the offerings must be recommenced.

On the last day of mourning the nearest kinsman of the deceased gathers his ashes, after offering an oblation singly for him prepared in the following manner:—

In the first place, the kinsman smears with cowdung the spot where the oblation is to be presented, and after washing his hands and feet, sipping water, and taking up *kuśa* grass in his hand, he sits down on a cushion pointed towards the south. He then places near him a bundle of *kuśa* grass, the tip of which must also point towards the south. He next places near him a bundle of *kuśa* grass consecrated by pronouncing the word *Namah*, or else prepares a fire for oblations; then lighting a lamp with clarified butter and arranging the food and other things intended to be offered, he must sprinkle himself with water, meditating on Vishnu, surnamed the Lotos-eyed, revolving in his mind this verse: 'Whether pure or defiled, or wherever he may have gone, he who remembers the being whose eyes are like the lotos shall be pure externally and internally.' Shifting the sacerdotal cord on his right shoulder, he takes up a brush of *kuśa* grass and presents water, together with *tila* and blossoms, naming the deceased and the family from whom he sprang, and saying, 'May this water for ablutions be acceptable to thee.' He then makes the solemn declaration: 'This day I will offer on a bundle of *kuśa* grass an oblation for a single person with unboiled food, together with clarified butter and water, preparatory to the gathering of the bones of such a one deceased.' He then presents a cushion of *kuśa* grass, naming the deceased, and saying, 'May this be acceptable to thee.'

He should afterwards feed the Bráhmanas whom he has assembled, either silently distributing food among them or adding a respectful invitation to them to eat. When he has given them water to rinse their mouths he may consider the deceased as fed through their intervention.

They then recite the *Gáyatrí*, and afterwards the following sentences:—

1. 'The embodied spirit, which hath a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, stands in the human breast, while he totally pervades the earth.'

2. 'That being is this universe, and all that has been or will be; he is that which grows by nourishment, and he is the distributor of immortality.'

3. 'Such is his greatness, and therefore is he the most excellent embodied spirit; the elements of the universe are one portion of him, and three portions of him are immortality in heaven.'

4. 'That threefold being rose above this world, and the single portion of him remained in this universe, which consists of what does and of what does not taste the reward of good and bad actions: again he pervaded the universe.'

5. 'From him sprang Viráj, from whom the first man was produced; and he, being successively reproduced, peopled the earth.'

6. 'From that single portion, surnamed the Universal Sacrifice, was the holy oblation of butter and curds produced; and this did frame all cattle, wild and domestic, which are governed by instinct.'

7. 'From that universal sacrifice were produced the strains of the *Rich* and *Sáman*; from him the sacred metres sprang; from him did the *Yajus* proceed.'

8. 'From him were produced horses and all beasts that have two rows of teeth; from him sprang cows; from him proceeded goats and sheep.'

9. 'Him the gods and demigods and holy sages consecrated as a victim on sacred grass, and thus performed a solemn act of religion.'

10. 'Into how many portions did they divide this being whom they immolated? What did his mouth become? What are his arms, his thighs, and his feet now called?'

11. 'His mouth became a priest, his arm was made a soldier, his thigh was transformed into a husbandman; from his feet sprang the servile man.'

12. 'The moon was produced from his mind, the sun sprang from his eye, air and breath proceeded from his ear, and fire rose from his mouth.'

13. 'The subtile element was produced from his navel, the sky from his head, the earth from his feet, and space from his ear: thus did he frame worlds.'

14. 'In that solemn sacrifice which the gods performed with him as a victim spring was the butter, summer the fuel, and sultry weather the oblation.'

15. 'Seven were the moats surrounding the altar, thrice seven were the logs of holy fuel, at that sacrifice which the gods performed, binding this being as the victim.'

16. 'By that sacrifice the gods worshipped this victim. Such were primeval duties, and thus did they attain heaven, where former gods and mighty demigods abide.'

After numerous other oblations and prayers, the son or nearest relation of the defunct, accompanied by his kinsmen, and clothed in clean apparel, repairs to the cemetery for the purpose of gathering the ashes of the deceased, carrying eight vessels filled with various flowers, roots, and similar things. He advances to the northern gate, or extremity of the funeral pile, sits down there, and presents two vessels as an oblation to spirits, with this prayer: 'May the adorable and eternal gods, who are present in this cemetery, accept from us this eightfold imperishable oblation; may they convey the deceased to pleasing and eternal abodes, and grant to us life, health, and peace. This eightfold oblation is offered to Siva and other deities. Salutation unto them.' Then walking round the spot, with his right side towards it, he successively places two other vessels, containing eight different things, at each of the three other gates which surround the funeral pile, and presents these oblations with the same formality as before.

He then shifts the sacerdotal string to his right shoulder, turns his face towards the south, and silently sprinkles the bones and ashes with cow's milk; he then first draws out from the ashes the bones of the head, and afterwards the other bones successively, sprinkles them with perfumed liquids and with clarified butter made from cow's milk, and puts them into a casket made of leaves, which he places in a new earthen vessel, covers it with a lid, and ties it up with thread. Choosing some clean spot, where encroachments of the river are not to be apprehended, he digs a very deep hole, and spreads *kuśa* grass at the bottom of it, and over the grass a piece of yellow cloth; he places thereon the earthen vessel containing the bones of the deceased, covers it with a lump of mud, together with thorns, moss, and mud, and plants a tree in the excavation or erects a standard. He and the rest of the kinsmen then bathe in their clothes. At a subsequent time the son or other near relation fills up the excavation and tends the ground; he throws the ashes of the funeral pile into the water, cleans the spot with cowdung and water, presents oblations to Siva and other deities in the manner before mentioned, dismisses those deities, and casts the oblation into water. Again at a subsequent time the son or other near relation carries the bones which were so buried to the river Ganges; he bathes there, rubs the vessel with the fine productions of kine, puts gold, honey, and clarified butter on the vessel, looks towards the south, and advances into the river with these words: 'Be there salutation unto justice.' He then throws the vessel into the waters of the Ganges, saying, 'May he (the deceased) be pleased with me.' Again bathing, he stands upright and contemplates the sun. He then sips water and pays the priests their fees.

So long as mourning lasts after gathering the ashes, the near relations of the deceased continue to offer water with the same formalities and prayers as above-mentioned,

and to refrain from factitious salt, butter, etc. On the last day of mourning the nearest relation puts on neat apparel and causes his house and furniture to be cleaned; he then goes out of town, and after offering the tenth funeral cake in the manner before described he makes ten libations of water from the palms of his hands, causes the hair of his head and of his body to be shaved and his nails to be cut, and gives the barbers the clothes which were worn at the funeral of the deceased, and adds some other remuneration. He then anoints his head and limbs down to his feet with oil of sesamum, rubs all his limbs with meal of sesamum, and his head with ground pods of white mustard. He bathes, sips water, touches and blesses various auspicious things, such as stones, clarified butter, white mustard, a cow, curds, honey, coral, and gold. He also touches a bambu staff. He now returns purified to his home, and thus completes the first obsequies of the deceased.

On the very day the period of mourning is considered finally completed a second series of obsequies commences, with the description of which, however, we will not trouble the reader. Enough has been said to show how very trifling and minute are the details of the Brahmanic ritual. It is said that formal obsequies are paid to ancestors no less than ninety-six times every year. As is well known, the rites of hospitality are very sacred in the eyes of the Hindu, and anyone who claims his hospitality receives it. A householder has to allot out of the food prepared for his own repast one portion to the gods, a second to progenitors, a third to all beings, and a fourth to his guests. He and his family may then, and not till then, consume the remaining portion of the food. The householder is also enjoined to give daily alms, but no particular time is prescribed for the distribution of them: he is simply directed to give food to religious mendicants whenever they come to his door, but especially if they come at the time when food is ready for his own meal. On the au-

thority of the *Purânas* it is also a common practice to feed a cow before he breaks his own fast. Indeed, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, a Hindu has enforced rules and minute regulations prescribed for him from the moment of his birth to the hour of his death, from his rising in the morning to his retiring at night. He has no free will, and is utterly under the dominion of the priest. Even from this necessarily condensed account of the ceremonies and religious rites we have given it is not difficult to understand how the higher minds rose in utter indignation against such slavery, how they denounced the sacerdotalism, and were determined to free themselves from it; how they rebelled against the imbecility of the ritual, and endeavoured to find some other religion more satisfying to their intellects, more intelligible to their consciences.

Before concluding this chapter we must slightly touch upon one more rite, a rite that was to the Hindu of very grave and awful importance—the duties of a faithful Hindu widow.

This ceremony is better known among Europeans than any of the other Hindu ceremonies, and it is chiefly owing to the horror caused in the European mind by it that the rite is now nearly or indeed, we believe we may say, wholly obsolete.

Yet upon reading the short account given of it by Mr. Colebrooke we confess that if the rite is very repugnant it also appears to us very touching. It seems, too, to be less hemmed in by the multitudinous details and fantastic absurdities of ritual. On the whole there appears to be very little of superstition in this ceremony, unless, indeed, we count a belief in immortality a superstition.

In order to comprehend any of the Hindu rites, but especially this one, we must remember that with the Hindus a belief in a future life was not merely a vague hope or a tremulous yearning. It was with them a complete certainty, a full conviction. As we said in the last chapter,

'existence in this world was to them a problem, in the next a simple fact.' Granting them this fact—arguing, that is to say, from their own premiss—it is not difficult to understand how the command of the wife's immolation arose. For the most part all laws invented by man are but artificial laws engendered or engrafted, in the first place, upon some natural law. Most probably the rite we are now considering was no exception to the rule. Most probably it arose as the natural craving, the dying wish of some attached husband who could not endure the idea of separation from his wife, who knew that that wife would obey the command as gladly as he had issued it. Horribly painful as that death might be, we cannot doubt that she would. Judge by our own women. What wife, in order to escape an enforced separation from her husband, either by the fact of his death or his expatriation, would not joyfully undergo less than an hour's torture if she were told it would prove a certain means to her rejoining that husband? What maiden would not do the same for her betrothed? Then, in addition to this, if the wife were told that by this self-immolation she would be making atonement for any sins her husband might have committed, that she would be insuring him a perfectly happy future, we can understand how the inducement would be heightened tenfold. It is difficult, perhaps, for us to comprehend the entire confidence and certainty the Hindus felt in another world. The most orthodox amongst us fall far short of their complete confidence in it. As we have shown in our account of the funeral rites, the Hindu believed the friend or relation whom he mourned could hear him speak, could eat food, was in all respects as much alive as we believe the friend whom we may have living in America or India to be alive. No wonder, then, that the faithful widow would immolate herself on her husband's corpse; it was but a painful quick passage to meeting him in eternity, meeting him in perfect happiness, meeting him never more to be separated and

parted. If our wives believed the same would they not be equally eager to endure the same?

We must remember, too, that the self-immolation is not compulsory; that is to say, it is held to be the sacred duty of a widow to burn herself with her husband's corpse; but she has the alternative of always living an austere life, which consists principally in acts of piety and mortification. She is never to eat more than one meal a day, not to sleep on a bed, to be always chaste, and constantly to use the name of God in prayer.

This enforced austerity is, perhaps, the most unjust and superstitious thing about the whole matter. If a woman really love her husband and wish to rejoin him it cannot be a very hard duty to undergo a few minutes' agony for the sake of enabling her to meet him, never again to be separated. It is a very different matter in the case of a wife who has not had a happy married life, who does not feel any pang when her husband dies, but, on the contrary, feels it her supremest happiness and content to be away from him, no longer to have to submit to his cruelties and tyrannies. It must be a very hard thing in such a case for a woman to be forced to lead a life of perpetual austerity and disgrace. There is another very cruel practice connected with this rite, but which is completely the growth of a later age, viz., the practice of compelling a nervous, frightened woman, who is trying to make up her mind to perform the duty of a faithful widow, into the flames, whether she will or not. It is laid down by these later writers that if a woman who goes to the funeral pile, intending to immolate herself on her husband's corpse, becomes suddenly terrified at the sight of the flames and wishes to recede, and at last absolutely refuses to proceed further, then and in such case her relations are required to pay no heed to her agonised entreaties, but are forcibly to compel her to complete the sacrifice.

Such a scene must, of course, be indescribably painful;

and it is utterly in the face of the earlier traditions which provide that 'if the woman, regretting life, recede from the pile she is defiled, but may be purified by observing the fast called Prájápátya.' This fast consists in abstaining for twelve days: the first three a spare meal must be taken once in each day; the next three, one in each night; the succeeding three days nothing must be eaten but what is given unsolicited; and the last three days are to be observed as a rigid fast.

All this, of course, is very cruel and very superstitious; but still, taking this rite as a whole, there seem to be fewer superstitions connected with it than with the majority of other Hindu rites. The burning of a Hindu widow is as much enjoined in the Rig-Veda as in later traditions, for it expressly declares 'the loyal wife who burns herself shall not be deemed a suicide.' A woman who is pregnant or even one whose pregnancy is doubtful may not ascend her husband's funeral pile, for she owes a duty to her children as well as to her husband. If she be left at the time of his decease with a young infant she may not ascend her husband's funeral pile unless she have provided some one whom she can faithfully trust to nourish and take care of the infant.

The ceremonies connected with this duty are as follows:—

Having first bathed, the widow, dressed in two clean garments and holding some kusa grass, sips water from the palm of her hand. She looks towards the east and north, while the Brahmana utters the mystic word *Om*; she then declares: 'I, that I may enjoy with my husband the felicity of heaven and sanctify my paternal and maternal progenitors and the ancestry of my husband's father, that expiation may be made for my husband's offences, whether he has killed a Brahmana or broken the ties of gratitude, or murdered his friend, thus I ascend my husband's burning pile. I call on you, ye guardians of the eight regions of

the world: Sun and Moon, Air, Fire, Ether, Earth, and Water! Yama! Day, Night, and Twilight! And thou, Conscience, bear witness I follow my husband's corpse on the funeral pile.' She then walks three times round the pile, while the Brahmanas utter this benediction: '*Om!* Let this faithful wife, pure and beautiful, commit herself to the fire with her husband's corpse.'

Then, being adorned with jewels, decked with mimium and other ornaments, having made adoration to the Devatas, she reflects as she walks round the pile, 'This life to me is nought; my lord and master to me was all.' She bestows jewels on the Brahmanas, comforts her relations; then calling the sun and elements to witness, she proceeds into the flames. There embracing the corpse, she abandons herself to the fire, exclaiming, 'Satya! Satya! Satya!'

We must bring this chapter to a close, almost fearing that we may have already wearied the reader with dwelling at such length on the trivialities and details of Brahmanic ritual; but in writing a history of Pantheism, as in writing any other history, it is as needful to represent it in its stage of obscurity and perversion as much as in its stage of glory and freshness. If Vedaism had not thus degenerated into Brahmanism not only would the religions of Buddha and Zoroaster most probably have not come into existence, but even the Vedanta, or Philosophy of the Hindus, would most probably never have been written. For the Vedanta philosophy, as we shall hereafter show, may be called a sort of philosophical apology and explanation of the Vedas, an attempt to save them from the fast-increasing encroachments and depredations of religious schisms and atheistic sects and philosophies, all of which schisms and philosophies were the natural consequents upon the revulsion and contempt caused by the degrading superstitions of Brahmanism.

It must not, of course, be thought that the whole of Brahmanism consisted of these fantastic details of ritual. There are many passages in the Institutes of Manu quite

worthy of the Rig-Veda itself, and displaying the doctrines of Pantheism and Emanation with singular purity; but, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, the sublimest thoughts are so often obscured and accompanied by the most ludicrous ceremonies, that one is apt to overlook the nugget through the thickness of its clay.

It will be only just, perhaps, or at all events not out of place, to conclude a chapter that has been principally devoted to displaying the worst phases of Brahmanism with a quotation from the Institutes of Manu quite worthy of the Rig-Veda itself; a quotation too that will fully show that even in the most degraded stage of their mental progress, the Hindus never wholly lost the pure pantheistic faith that was the basis of all their religions:—

'This universe existed only in the first divine idea, yet unexpanded, as if involved in darkness, imperceptible, undefinable, undiscoverable by reason, and undiscovered by revelation, as if it were wholly immersed in sleep. Then the sole self-existing power, himself undiscerned, but making this world discernible, with five elements and other principles of nature, appeared with undiminished glory expanding his idea, or dispelling the gloom. He whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity, even He, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend, shone forth in person. He, having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first with a thought created the waters. The waters are so called (*nara*) because they were the production of Nara, or the Spirit of God; and since they were his first *ayaná*, or place of motion, he thence is named Narayana, or Moving on the Waters. From that which is the first cause, not the object of sense existing everywhere in substance, not existing to our perception, without beginning or end, was produced the divine Male. He framed the heaven above, the earth beneath, and in the midst placed the subtle ether, the light

regions, and the permanent receptacle of waters. He framed all creatures. He gave being to time and the divisions of time; to the stars also and planets he gave being. For the sake of distinguishing actions he made a total difference between right and wrong. He whose powers are incomprehensible, having created this universe, was again absorbed in the Spirit, changing the time of energy for the time of repose.' [1]

[1] Quoted by Draper in 'The Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. i. pp. 224, 225.

CHAPTER III.

DIGRESSION ON VARIOUS HINDU PHILOSOPHIES, WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SCHISM OF BUDDHA.

THE extreme mysticism and sacerdotalism of the Brahmanic priesthood gave rise to the two great religious schisms of Zoroaster and Buddha; upon the latter of which in the course of this chapter we shall somewhat fully touch. In addition to these two great religious systems there arose many philosophical schools, some of which were orthodox and chiefly confined to the exposition of the Vedas; but the majority were heretical.

In the present treatise, however, it is the consideration of the Vedanta philosophy which chiefly concerns us, on account of its Pantheistic doctrines. Yet, as it was written chiefly in refutation of the atheistical and heretical systems of philosophy, it may be as well before we proceed to the Vedanta to give a slight account of these several systems, devoting the most space to the schism of Buddha, partly on account of its own great intrinsic interest, and also because it was the system more particularly singled out for contest by the Vedantins.

The first school or system of which we shall treat is that of the Sánkhya philosophy, which is divided into two sects; one of which was more or less atheistical in its tenets, and was founded by Kapila, an ancient Hindu sage, whose life and character have been so obscured by the marvels of mythology that it is wiser not to commit oneself to many details concerning him. The other sect of the Sánkhya

philosophy is theistical in its doctrines, and was founded by a personage even more mythological than Kapila, named Patanjali. Patanjali's philosophy is generally called the *Yoga* or *Yoga-śástra* (of which the nearest interpretation we have in our language is the word mystic), whereas Kapila's philosophy more often goes by the name of the Sánkhya. There is also a third school of the Sánkhya philosophy which resembles in many features the doctrines both of Kapila and Patanjali; or, indeed, may be called a cross between them, its only distinguishing mark being that it considers nature an illusion. This third division goes by the name of *Pauránika-sánkhya.*

The acknowledged design of all the Sánkhyas is to teach the means whereby eternal beatitude may be attained after death. In this wise the Vedanta and many other Hindu philosophies resemble the Sánkhya. 'Future pain,' says Patanjali, 'is to be prevented. A clear knowledge of discriminate truth is the way of its prevention.' According to Kapila temporal means, such as oblations, sacrifice, &c., are insufficient. It is true knowledge alone that is capable of securing entire and permanent deliverance from evil. The Sánkhya, in common with many Indian as well as Greek philosophies, is much engaged with the consideration of *three* principles or qualities, the first and highest of which, according to the Sánkhya doctrine, is goodness (*sattwa*). It alleviates, enlightens, and is attended with pleasure and happiness. In fire it is prevalent; wherefore flame ascends and sparks fly upward. In man when it abounds it is the cause of virtue.

The second and intermediate is foulness or passion (*rajas* or *téjas*). It is active, urgent, and variable, attended with evil and misery, and is the cause of vice in human beings. In air it predominates; wherefore wind moves transversely.

The third and lowest is darkness (*tamas*). It is heavy and obstructive, attended with sorrow, dullness and illu-

sion. In living beings it is the cause of stolidity. In earth and water it predominates; wherefore they fall or tend downwards. These three qualities are considered to be not mere accidents of nature, but are of its essence and enter into its composition.

According to the Yoga doctrine the promptest mode of attaining beatitude through absorbed contemplation is devotion to God, muttering his mystical name, *Om*, and meditating at the same time on its signification. 'God, Íśwara, the supreme ruler,' according to Patanjali, 'is a soul or spirit distinct from other souls, unaffected by the ills with which they are beset, unconcerned with good or bad deeds and their consequences, and with fancies and passing thoughts. In him is the utmost omniscience. He is the instructor of the earliest beings that have a beginning, and is himself infinite, unlimited by time.'

Kapila, on the other hand, according to Colebrooke, denies an Íśwara, ruler of the world by volition, alleging that there is no proof of God's existence, unperceived by the senses, not inferred from reasoning, nor yet revealed. He acknowledges, indeed, a being issuing from Nature, who is intelligence absolute, source of all individual intelligences, and origin of other existences successively evolved and developed. He expressly affirms 'that the truth of such an Íśwara is demonstrated.' Yet that being is finite, having a beginning and an end. An infinite being, creator and guide of the universe by volition, Kapila positively disavows. 'Detached from nature, unaffected therefore by consciousness and the rest of Nature's trammels, he could have no inducement to creation; fettered by Nature, he would not be capable of creation.'

We perceive, therefore, that in the most important essentials Kapila's philosophy differs greatly from that of Patanjali.

We must turn now to the atomical school of Kanáda, and to the dialectical school of Gotama. They are respec-

tively called *Vaiseśhika* and *Nyáya*. The first is occupied with physics; the second with the metaphysics of logic. According to Colebrooke they may be taken generally as parts of one system, supplying each other's deficiencies. Both doctrines are more or less in accordance with the Vedas.

The order observed, both by Kanada and Gotama, in delivering the precepts of their doctrine is that which had been intimated in a passage of the Vedas as requisite steps of instruction and study, viz. enunciation, definition, and investigation. Enunciation is the mention of a thing by its name. Definition sets forth a peculiar property constituting the essential nature of the thing. Investigation consists in disquisition upon the pertinence and sufficiency of the definition.

In a logical arrangement the 'predicaments' or objects of proof are six, as they are enumerated by Kanada, viz., substance, quality, action, community, particularity, and aggregation or relation. To which a seventh is added by other authors, privation or negation. The Bauddhas or followers of Buddha are said to identify the predicaments with knowledge, and according to the Pantheistic interpretation of the Vedanta the predicaments are identified with the universal being Brahma, in whom all exists.

According to Gotama the first and most important thing to be proved is soul. It is the site of knowledge or sentiment, distinct from the senses. It is infinite. It experiences the fruit of its deeds, pain or pleasure. It is eternal, because it is infinite, for whatever is infinite is also eternal.

The second among matters to be proved in Gotama's enumeration is body. It is the site of effort, of organs of sensation, and of the sentiment of pain or pleasure. It is an ultimate compound; the seat of soul's enjoyment. It is a whole composed of parts, a framed substance, associated with which soul experiences fruition.

Mind is the instrument which effects the apprehension of pain, pleasure, or interior sensations. It is not infinite, but it is minutely small, as an atom. Were it infinite it might be united with everything at once, and all sensations might be contemporaneous. It is eternal, and is distinct from soul as well as body, with which it is merely conjoined.

Material substances are by Kanada considered to be primarily atoms; and secondarily aggregates. He maintains the eternity of atoms; and their existence and aggregation are explained as follows:—[1]

'The mote which is seen in a sunbeam is the smallest perceptible quantity. Being a substance and an effect, it must be composed of what is less than itself; and this likewise is a substance and an effect, for the component part of a substance that has magnitude must be an effect. This again must be composed of what is smaller, and that smaller thing is an atom. It is simple and uncomposed, else the series would be endless; and were it pursued indefinitely there would be no difference of magnitude between a mustard-seed and a mountain, a gnat and an elephant, each alike containing an infinity of particles. The ultimate atom, then, is simple.

'The first compound consists of two atoms, for one does not enter into composition, and there is no proof that more than two must, for inchoation, be united. The next consists of three double atoms, for if only two were conjoined magnitude would hardly ensue, since it must be produced either by size or number of particles; it cannot be their size, and therefore it must be their number. Nor is there any reason for assuming the union of four double atoms, since three suffice to originate magnitude. The atom, then, is reckoned to be the sixth part of a mote visible in a sunbeam.

[1] Colebrooke's 'Essays,' vol. i. pp. 298, 299.

'Two earthly atoms, concurring by an unseen peculiar virtue, the creative will of God, or time or other competent cause, constitute a double atom of earth; and by concourse of three binary atoms a tertiary atom is produced; and by concourse of triple atoms a quaternary atom; and so on to a gross, grosser, or grossest mass of earth. Thus great earth is produced, and in like manner great water from aqueous atoms, great light from luminous, and great air from aerial. The qualities that belong to the effect are those which appertained to the integrant part, or primary particle, as its material cause; and conversely, the qualities which belong to the cause are found in the effect.

'The dissolution of substances proceeds inversely. In the integrant parts of an aggregate substance resulting from composition, as in the potsherds of an earthen jar, action is induced by pressure attended with velocity, or by simple pressure. Disjunction ensues, whereby the union, which was the cause of inchoation of members, is annulled, and the integral substance, consisting of those members, is resolved into its parts, and is destroyed, for it ceases to subsist as a whole.'

The two sects considered most heretical by orthodox Hindus are those of Jina and Buddha. There are many sects, such as the Sánkhyas and Vaiśeshikas, which in reality are almost equally heretical, but which have a certain semblance of orthodoxy, inasmuch as they do not venture to openly disclaim the authority of the Veda. But the Jainas and the Bauddhas utterly disavow the faintest credence in the Veda, and are therefore considered to be beyond the pale of the Hindu Church in its most comprehensive range. Neither of the sects believe in a Creator or Moral Providence, but assign for the cause of the world atoms, thus following in a measure the doctrine of Kanada, although there is considerable divergence of opinion as to how these atoms act and react one upon

another. We shall omit giving a detailed account of the philosophy of the Jainas and proceed at once to the consideration of that of the Bauddhas.

The life of Buddha is not without interest. We shall therefore endeavour to give as clear and concise an account of it as we can, bearing in mind, however, that as the earliest traditions we have at present discovered concerning Buddha were not written till nearly 300 years after his death, our account must be only taken for what it is worth.

It is, of course, scarcely necessary for us to inform our readers that the name of the founder of Buddhism was not Buddha. For the sake of the few, however, who may be in ignorance of the fact, we may just mention that the name Buddha is merely a distinctive appellation such as we may often find occurring in our own history in the words 'The Conqueror,' 'Cœur de Lion,' &c. Buddha, or more properly 'The Buddha,' is a Sanskrit word signifying 'The Enlightened,' and was not assumed by Buddha until after he had attained maturity.

Arddha Chiddi, the founder of Buddhism, was born at Kapilavastu, the capital of a kingdom of the same name, situated at the foot of the mountains of Nepaul, north of the present Oude. It is uncertain whether he flourished in the fifth or sixth century before Christ. M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire places the date of his death at 543 B. C.; M. Max Müller places it at 477 B. C. His father, the King of Kapilavastu, was of the family of the Śákyas, and belonged to the clan of the Gautamas. His mother was Mâyâdêvî, a very beautiful woman and the daughter of King Suprabuddha. Arddha Chiddi took the name of Sakya from his family, and that of Gautama from his clan. His mother died seven days after his birth, and he was confided to the care of her sister. The child grew up a beautiful and accomplished boy, and soon learnt to know more than his teachers themselves. He cared not for games or sports, but loved to wander to some lonely forest and indulge in

meditation. One day he remained away so long that his father was afraid he was lost and went to search for him, and found him in this same forest deeply meditating. Then the father and his ministers had a weighty consultation, and they came to the conclusion that the best way to prevent the boy from becoming an utter dreamer would be to marry him to some beautiful fascinating maiden. When the subject of marriage was broached to the young heir he demanded seven days for reflection. Convinced at last that not even marriage could disturb the tranquillity of his mind, he allowed the ministers to look out for a princess. Their choice fell on the beautiful Gopâ, the daughter of Dandapâni. The marriage proved to be a very happy one. But still the young prince remained absorbed in meditation on the problems of life and death. 'Nothing is stable on earth,' he used to say, 'nothing is real. Life is like the spark produced by the friction of wood. It is lighted and is extinguished—we know not whence it came or whither it goes. There must be some supreme intelligence where we could find rest. If I attained it I could bring light to man; if I were free myself I could deliver the world.' Already melancholy and thoughtful, given up to dreaminess and love of solitude, there happened to him three events not uncommon in the life of any man, but which to him in his present mood of metaphysical abstraction proved of the utmost importance in deciding his career. We quote the description of these occurrences from M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire:—[1]

'One day when the prince with a large retinue drove through the eastern gate of the city, on the way to one of his parks, he met on the road an old man, broken and decrepit. One could see the veins and muscles over the whole of his body; his teeth chattered; he was covered with wrinkles, bald, and hardly able to utter hollow and

[1] Quoted by Max Müller in 'The Chips of a German Workshop,' vol. i. pp. 210–212.

unmelodious sounds. He was bent on his stick, and all his limbs and joints trembled. "Who is that man?" said the prince to the coachman. "He is small and weak, his muscles stick to his skin, his flesh and blood are dried up, his head is white, his teeth chatter, his body is wasted away; leaning on his stick, he is hardly able to walk, stumbling at every step. Is there something peculiar in his family, or is this the common lot of all created beings?"

'"Sir," replied the coachman, "that man is sinking under old age; his .senses have become obtuse, suffering has destroyed his strength, and he is despised by his relations. He is without support and useless, and people have abandoned him, like a dead tree in a forest. But this is not peculiar to his family. In every creature youth is defeated by old age. Your father, your mother, all your relations, all your friends will come to the same state; this is the appointed end of all creatures."

'"Alas!" replied the prince, "are creatures so ignorant, so weak and foolish, as to be proud of the youth by which they are intoxicated, not seeing the old age which awaits them? As for me I go away. Coachman, turn my chariot quickly. What have I, the future prey of old age—what have I to do with pleasure?" And the young prince returned to the city without going to his park.

'Another time the prince drove through the southern gate to his pleasure-garden, when he perceived on the road a man suffering from illness, parched with fever, his body wasted, covered with mud, without a friend, without a home, hardly able to breathe, and frightened at the sight of himself and the approach of death. Having questioned his coachman, and received from him the answer he expected, the young prince said, "Alas! health is but the sport of a dream, and the fear of suffering must take this frightful form. Where is the wise man who, after having seen what he is, could any longer think of joy and pleasure?" The prince turned his chariot and returned to the city.

'A third time he drove to his pleasure-garden through the western gate, when he saw a dead body on the road, lying on a bier and covered with a cloth. The friends stood about crying, sobbing, tearing their hair, covering their heads with dust, striking their breasts, and uttering wild cries. The prince, again calling his coachman to witness this painful scene, exclaimed, "Oh! woe to youth, which must be destroyed by old age! Woe to health, which must be destroyed by so many diseases! Woe to this life, where a man remains so short a time! If there were no old age, no disease, no death; if these could be made captive for ever!" Then, betraying for the first time his intentions, the young prince said, "Let us turn back; I must think how to accomplish deliverance."

'A last meeting put an end to his hesitation. He drove through the northern gate on the way to his pleasure-gardens, when he saw a mendicant, who appeared outwardly calm, subdued, looking downwards, wearing with an air of dignity his religious vestment, and carrying an alms-bowl.

'"Who is this man?" asked the prince.

'"Sir," replied the coachman, "this man is one of those who are called Bhikshus, or mendicants. He has renounced all pleasures, all desires, and leads a life of austerity. He tries to conquer himself. He has become a devotee. Without passion, without envy, he walks about asking for alms."

'"This is good and well said," replied the prince. "The life of a devotee has always been praised by the wise. It will be my refuge, and the refuge of other creatures; it will lead us to a real life, to happiness and immortality."

'With these words the young prince turned his chariot and returned to the city.'

He was then about twenty-nine years of age, and he forthwith made up his mind to retire from the world. For the name by which his parents had called him he substituted that of Gautama or Gotama—according to some,

simply because it was the name of his father's clan; but according to others because the signification of the name is 'He who kills the senses.' Subsequently Gotama called himself 'Chakia Mouni,' or the Penitent of Chakia, or Sakya. After having declared to his father and his wife his intention of retiring from the world, Gotama left his palace one night when all the guards that were to have watched him were asleep. After travelling the whole night he gave his horse and his ornaments to his groom and sent him back to Kapilavastu. It is said there is a monument still to be seen on the spot where the coachman turned his back.

Gotama proceeded on his way, and first went to Vaisâlî, and became the pupil of a famous Brahman who had already gathered round him three hundred pupils. But Gotama quickly learnt all that could be taught him here. He went away disappointed. He had not gained the knowledge he desired. He put himself under another teacher, but with the same result. He had not found that which he required. At last he was determined to see whether he could not learn more by studying by himself in quietness than by placing himself under masters. Accompanied by five of his fellow-students, he retired into solitude near a village named Uruvilva. He remained there six years, living a life of the most severe asceticism. Yet he was forced to admit that even now he had not gained the knowledge he desired. On the contrary, he was convinced that asceticism, instead of giving him the peace of mind he had hoped, was only a stumbling-block in the way of truth. He discontinued his fastings and penances. He discontinued his exercises and ascetic practices, and was in consequence deserted by his five disciples as an apostate. Left to himself and his own devices, he spent whole days in meditation and deep thought. He had tried master after master, teacher after teacher; he had tried solitude and asceticism, but nothing seemed to procure for him the only

knowledge he cared to gain: how to teach him to accomplish the deliverance of man; how to free himself from fear of death and disease and old age; how to teach others to free themselves from that fear also. Left to himself, he began now slowly and by degrees to elaborate that system of philosophy and religion which was destined to number more souls among its adherents than any single system of thought had numbered before or would number hereafter. After long meditations and ecstatic visions that were probably the natural consequence of so much thought and study, he believed that he had at last really arrived at the knowledge which discloses the cause and thereby destroys the fear of all the changes inherent in life. It was now for the first time he assumed the name of 'The Buddha,' or 'The Enlightened.' Amongst his earliest disciples were his wife and his aunt, but before the year had ended he had already gained disciples to the number of twelve hundred. He died at the advanced age of eighty years, and his corpse was burnt eight days subsequently.

Buddha seems to have spent his life in oral teaching, like Socrates, and has left no written documents behind him. It is for that reason there is so much difficulty in understanding his doctrines. And, indeed, it must be remembered throughout the remaining part of this chapter that when we are nominally relating the tenets of Buddha we are in reality only relating the tenets of the *sect* of Buddha. And it requires but a very cursory acquaintance with history to teach us how very materially and how very frequently the doctrines of the sect differ from the doctrines of the founder.

Some centuries after the death of Buddha a vast body of writings was compiled which now forms the Buddhist canon, called the Three Tripitakas, or Baskets; the first of which comprised the *Sûtras*, or discourses of Buddha; the second consisted of the *Vinaya*, or discipline; and the third treated of *Akhidharma*, or metaphysics. These are said to have been arranged by three celebrated Councils

The first was held immediately after Buddha's death; but as to the dates of the other two tradition varies. That of the Northern Buddhists, current in Nepaul, Tibet, and China, declares that these canonical works were written in Sanskrit, and fixes the second Council as held 110 years after the first, in the reign of Asoka, King of Pataliputra, and the third as held more than 400 years after the death of Buddha. The tradition of the Southern Buddists, current in Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam, maintains that the original language was Pali, and fixes the second Council as held 100 years after Buddha's death, in the reign of Kálásoka, and the third 235 years after Buddha, under the Great Asoka. There are thus two separate accounts of the Buddhist canonical works: one in Sanskrit, and the other in Pali. Scholars, however, seem tolerably agreed in thinking the Pali account is the older and more correct; and hence the importance of the study of Pali for the investigation of primitive Buddhism.

Either from diversity of instruction delivered by Buddha to his disciples at different times, or, more probably, from different constructions of the same text more or less literal, and varying with the degree of sagacity of the disciple, there have arisen no less than four sects among the followers of the founder of Buddhism. As well for the sake of space, and also because by so doing we are more likely to be keeping to the real doctrines of Buddha himself, we shall only touch upon such tenets as the four sects held in common.

The foundations of the creed of Buddhism have been summed up in the very ancient formula, probably invented by its founder, called the Four Great Truths. These are:—1st. That misery always accompanies existence. 2nd. That all modes of existence (of men or animals, in earth or heaven) proceed from passion or desire. 3rd. That there is no escape from existence except by destruction of desire. 4th. That this may be accomplished by following the four-fold way to Nirvana.

Of these four stages, called 'The Paths,' the first is an awakening of the heart, which consists in fully realising that the pleasures of the world do not constitute real happiness; that sorrow is the lot of every man; that misery is inseparable from existence.

When the awakened believer has gone still further and freed himself from all impure desires and revengeful feelings he has reached the second stage.

The third stage is accomplished when he has completely got rid of doubt, heresy, desire, vexation, and unkindness.

When he has freed himself from every selfish desire, whether of sense or of worldly ambition; when he is completely pervaded with an universal charity, then and not till then has he attained the fourth stage.

The absorbing aim of every Buddhist is the attainment of Nirvána, or practical extinction. This can only be accomplished by a long process of rigorous self-watchfulness, abstinence, study, and self-denial. It cannot be obtained by a mere process of mortification in this world. It requires long ages and series of transmigrations through many worlds. But at last the supreme desideratum, Nonenity, is accomplished; the labours of the wearied soul are finally completed, and it becomes at length as though it had never been.

The morality of Buddhism is sublime, the philosophical opinions frequently very grand; yet one cannot help wondering why (if misery be the invariable accompaniment of existence, and nonentity the sole be-all and end-all of existence), among the many commandments and prohibitions of its founder, an injunction of celibacy and a prohibition of procreation are not found. Nirvána would then be attained without the misery and wretchedness consequent on the prosecution of such attainment. Surely it were the height of barbarity and cruelty to procreate a race whose only sensation will be that of

unremitting longing and endeavour to free themselves from the burden of existence with which they have been endowed!

The Buddhists were as nearly atheists as it is possible for any philosophical or religious sect to be. It is probable they may not have denied *in toto* the existence of a God; but their idea of God was that of a supreme force, and not of a supreme intelligence. And their philosophical opinions led them to conclude that there was no necessity for presupposing the existence of a particular Providence or moral guide.[1]

'From seed comes a germ; from this a branch; then a culm or stem, whence a leafy gem; out of which a bud, from which a blossom; and thence finally fruit. Where one is the other ensues. Yet the seed is not conscious of producing the germ; nor is this aware of coming from seed; and hence is inferred production without a thinking cause and without a ruling Providence.

'Again, earth furnishes solidity to the seed and coherence to the germ; water moistens the grain; fire warms and matures it; air or wind supplies impulse to vegetation, ether expands the seed, and season transmutes it. By concurrence of all these seed vegetates and a sprout grows. Yet earth and the rest of these concurrent occasions are unconscious; and so are the seed, germ, and the rest of the effects.

'Likewise in the moral world, where ignorance or error is, there is passion: where error is not neither is passion there. But they are unconscious of mutual relation.'[2]

According to the late Professor Childers the Buddhists believe in twelve *nidanas*, or causes of existence. These are: Error, from whence springs Karma; from Karma

[1] It is to be lamented that Lange, in his otherwise admirable 'History of Materialism,' did not trace the origin and commencement of that doctrine through its primary Oriental source.

[2] Colebrooke's 'Essays,' vol. i. pp. 419, 420.

springs Consciousness; from Consciousness springs the Organised Being; from the Organised Being spring the six organs of sense; from the six organs of sense springs Contact; from Contact springs Sensation; from Sensation springs Desire; from Desire springs Attachment; from Attachment springs Continued Existence; from Continued Existence springs Birth; from Birth spring Decay and Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, physical and mental Suffering, and Despair.[1]

Ignorance or error is the mistake of supposing that to be durable which is but momentary. Thence comes passion, comprising desire, aversion, delusion, &c. Besides these matters, which have a real existence but momentary duration, the Bauddhas distinguish, under the category of unreal, false, or non-existent, three topics: first, wilful and observable destruction of an existing thing, as the breaking of a jar by a stroke of a mallet; second, unobserved nullity or annihilation; and, third, vacancy or space unencompassed and unshielded, or the imaginary ethereal element.

The whole of this doctrine is formally refuted by the Vedantins. The entire aggregate, referred to two sources, external and internal, cannot be, nor the world's course dependent thereon, for the members of it are insensible; and its very existence is made to depend on the flash of thought; yet no other thinking permanent being is acknowledged, accumulating that aggregate, directing it, or enjoying; nor is there an inducement to activity without a purpose and merely momentary. 'Nor is the alleged concatenation of events admissible, for there is no reason for it. Their existence depends on that of the aggregate of which they are alleged to be severally causes.' 'Nor is self or soul momentary—memory and recollection prove it—and there is no doubt or error therein; for the individual is conscious that he is the same who to-day remembers what he yesterday saw.'

[1] Colebrooke's 'Essays,' vol. i. p. 453.

In the published accounts of the religious opinions of the Bauddhas and Jainas, derived principally from oral information, doubts have been expressed as to the sense attached by them to the terms which they use to signify the happy state at which the perfect saints arrive. It has been questioned whether annihilation, or what other condition short of such absolute extinction, is meant to be described. Both the sects, like most others of Indian origin, propose for the grand object to which man should aspire the attainment of a final happy state, from which there is no return.

All agree in assigning to its attainment the same term, *mukti* or *moksha*, with some shades of difference in the interpretation of the word: as emancipation, deliverance from evil, liberation from worldly bonds, relief from further transmigration, &c. Many other terms are in use, as synonymous with it—and so employed by all or nearly all sects—to express a state of final release from the world: such as *amrita*, immortality; *apavarga*, conclusion, &c. But the term which the Bauddhas as well as Jainas more particularly affect, but which, however, is also used by the other sects, is *nirvána*, profound calm. In its ordinary acceptation, as an adjective, it signifies extinct, as a fire which is gone out; set, as a luminary which has gone down; defunct, as a saint who has passed away. Its etymology is from *vá*, to blow as wind, with the preposition *nir* used in a negative sense: it means calm and unruffled. A happy state of imperturbable apathy is the ultimate bliss to which the Indian aspires: in this the *Jaina* as well as the *Bauddha* concurs with the orthodox Vedántin.

Great difference of opinion has long existed among European scholars as to the real nature of Nirvána; but Mr. Childers has cleared up most of the difficulties in his article on *Nibbánam* in his Pali Dictionary: '*Nirvána* is applied to two different things: first, that annihila-

tion of being which is the goal of Buddhism; and, secondly, the state of blissful sanctification called *arahatta* or *arhatship*, which terminates in annihilation.' Thus annihilation (as already indicated by the etymology) is the only ultimate meaning; all existence is absolutely an evil to the Buddhist, and consequently its absolute extinction is the only *summum bonum*. But although this may have been the true teaching of Buddhism from the first it does not follow that it was universally accepted and understood, especially as the doctrine spread beyond the limits of India and Ceylon.

Goldstücker well distinguishes the Brahmanical *Moksha* from the Buddhist *Nirvána*: 'The Brahmanic Hindus hope that their soul will ultimately become united with the universal Spirit, which, in the language of the Upanishads, is the neuter Brahma; and in that of the sects, the supreme Deity, who takes the place of this philosophical and impersonal god. And however indefinite this god Brahma may be, it is nevertheless to the mind of the Brahmanic Hindu an *entity*. The final salvation of a Buddhist is entire non-entity. The various expressions for eternal bliss in the Brahmanic creed, like *moksha*, *mukti*, etc., all signify either "liberation from this earthly career" or the "absolute good:" they, therefore, imply a condition of hope. The absolute end of a Buddhist is without hope; it is Nirvána, or extinction.'

68307

CHAPTER IV.

THE VEDÁNTA PHILOSOPHY.

THE portion of Hindu philosophy most completely Pantheistic in its doctrines is that which goes by the name of the Vedánta, the literal interpretation of which is 'Conclusion of the Veda.' It is chiefly occupied with 'an inquiry concerning God, the omnipotent Creator of the world and omniscient Author of revelation.' But in addition to this it devotes a good deal of space to the refutation of the doctrines of the various atheistical and materialistic sects.

The manner in which the Vedantins describe the nature of God and the soul is as follows:—

'This omnipotent, omniscient Cause of the Universe is essentially happy. He is the brilliant golden person seen within the solar orb and human eye. He is the ethereal element from which all things proceed and to which all return. He is the breath in which all beings merge, into which they all rise. He is the light which shines in heaven and in all places high and low, everywhere throughout the world, and within the human person. He is the breath and intelligent self, immortal, undecaying and happy, with which Indra, in a dialogue with Pratardana, identifies himself.'

'This universe is indeed Brahma, for it springs from him, merges in him, breathes in him; therefore serene —worship him. Ether and air are by Brahma created. But he himself has no origin, no procreator nor maker, for he is eternal, without beginning and without end. So, fire

and water and earth proceed mediately from him, being evolved successively, the one from the other, as fire from air, and this from ether. It is by his will, not by their own act, that they are so evolved; and conversely they merge one into the other, in the reversed order, and are re-absorbed at the general dissolution of worlds previous to renovation of all things.

'Intellect, mind, and organs of sense and action, being composed of the primary elements, are evolved and re-absorbed in no different order or succession, but in that of the elements of which they consist. The same course, evolution and re-absorption, or material birth and death, cannot be affirmed of the soul. Birth and death are predicated of an individual, referring merely to his association with the body, which is matter fixed and movable. The soul is a portion of the supreme Ruler, as a spark is of fire. The relation is not as that of master and servant, or ruler and ruled, but as that of whole and part.'

'The soul is subject to transmigration. It passes from one state to another, invested with a subtile frame consisting of elementary particles, the seed or rudiment of a grosser body. Departing from that which it occupied, it ascends to the moon, where, clothed with an aqueous form, it experiences the recompense of its works, and whence it returns to occupy a new body with resulting influence of its former deeds. But evil-doers suffer for their misdeeds in the seven appointed regions of retribution. The returning soul quits its watery frame in the lunar orb and passes successively and rapidly through ether, air, vapour, mist, and cloud and rain, and thus finds its way into a vegetating plant; and thence through the medium of nourishment into an animal embryo. Of a dying person the speech, followed by the ten exterior faculties (not the corporeal organs themselves), is absorbed into the mind, for the action of the outer organ ceases before the mind's. This, in like manner, retires into the breath, attended

likewise by all the other vital functions, for they are life's companions; and the same retreat of the mind is observable, also, in profound sleep and in a swoon. Breath, attended likewise by all other vital faculties, is withdrawn into the living soul which governs the corporeal organs, as the attendants of a king assemble around him when he is setting out upon a journey, for all vital functions gather about the soul at the last moment when it is expiring. The living soul, attended with all its faculties, retires within a rudiment of the body, composed of light with the rest of the five elements, in a subtile state. "Breath" is therefore said to withdraw into "light"; not meaning that element or fire exclusively, nor intending direct transition, for a traveller has gone from one city to another, though he passed through an intermediate town.

'This retirement from the body is common to ordinary, uninformed people as to the devout, contemplative worshipper, until they proceed further on their respective paths; and immortality (without immediate unity with the supreme Brahma) is the fruit of pious meditation, though impediments may not be wholly consumed and removed.

'In that condition the soul of the contemplative worshipper remains united to a subtile elementary frame, conjoined with the vital faculties, until the dissolution of worlds, when it merges in the supreme Deity. That elementary frame is minute in its dimensions as subtile in its texture, and is accordingly imperceptible to bystanders when departing from the body; nor is it oppressed by cremation or other treatment which the body undergoes. It is by its warmth sensible so long as it abides with that coarser frame, which becomes cold in death when it has departed, and was warm during life while it remained.

'But he who has attained the true knowledge of God does not pass through the same stages of retreat, proceeding directly to reunion with the supreme being, with which he is identified, as a river, at its confluence with the sea,

merges therein altogether. His vital faculties and the elements of which his body consists, all the sixteen component parts which constitute the human frame, are absorbed absolutely and completely: both name and form cease; and he becomes immortal, without parts or members.

'The supreme being is neither coarse nor subtile, neither long nor short, neither audible nor tangible; amorphous, invariable. This luminous immortal being who is in the earth is the same with the luminous immortal embodied spirit, which informs the corporeal self, and is the same with the supreme soul. He is to be apprehended by mind alone; there is not here any multiplicity. Whosoever views him as manifold dies death after death. He is amorphous, for so he is expressly declared to be; but seemingly assuming form, as sunshine or moonlight, impinging on an object, appears straight or crooked. The luminous sun, though single, yet reflected in the water becomes various; and so does the unborn divine soul by disguise in divers modes.

'He is imperceptible; yet during devout meditation is as it were apprehended by perception and reverence through revelation and authentic recollections.

'Like the sun and other luminaries, seemingly multiplied by reflection, though really single, and like ether or space apparently subdivided in vessels containing it within limits, the supreme light is without difference or distinction of particulars, for he is repeatedly declared so to be. Therefore is one who knows the truth identified with the infinite being, for so revelation indicates. But since both are affirmed, the relation is that of a coiled serpent fancied to be a hoop, or as that of light and the luminary from which it proceeds, for both are luminous.

'There is none other but He, notwithstanding the apparent import of divers texts, which seem to imply differences, various relations, and aliquot parts. He is

ubiquitary and eternal, for he is pronounced to be greater than ethereal space which is infinite.'

The doctrine of atoms, which the Jainas have in common with the *Bauddhas* and the *Vaiśeshikas* (followers of Kanáda), is controverted by the *Vedántins*. The train of reasoning is to the following effect: 'Inherent qualities of the cause,' the *Vaiśeshikas* and the rest agree, 'give origin to the like qualities in the effect, as white yarn makes white cloth: were a thinking being the world's cause it would be endued with thought.' The answer is, that according to Kanáda himself substances great and long result from atoms minute and short: like qualities, then, are not always found in the cause and the effect.

'The whole world, with its mountains, seas, &c., consists of substances composed of parts disposed to union, as cloth is wove of a multitude of threads. The utmost subdivision of compound substances, pursued to the last degree, arrives at the atom, which is eternal, being simple; and such atoms, which are the elements, earth, water, fire, and air, become the world's causes, according to Kanáda: for there can be no effect without a cause. When they are actually and universally separated dissolution of the world has taken place. At its renovation atoms concur by an unseen virtue, which occasions action; and they form double atoms, and so on, to constitute air; then fire, next water, and afterwards earth; subsequently body, with its organs; and ultimately this whole world. The concurrence of atoms arises from action (whether of one or both), which must have a cause: that cause, alleged to be an unseen virtue, cannot be insensible, for an insensible cause cannot incite action; nor can it be design, for a being capable of design is not yet existent, coming later in the progress of creation. Either way, then, no action can be; consequently no union or disunion of atoms; and these, therefore, are not the cause of the world's formation or disolution. Eternal atoms and tran-

sitory double atoms differ utterly; and union of discordant principles cannot take place. If aggregation be assumed as a reason of their union, still the aggregate and its integrants are utterly different; and an intimate relation is further to be sought, as a reason for the aggregation. Even this assumption therefore fails.

'Atoms must be essentially active or inactive: were they essentially active, creation would be perpetual; if essentially inactive, dissolution would be constant.

'Eternity of causeless atoms is incompatible with properties ascribed to them; colour, taste, smell, and tactility: for things possessing such qualities are seen to be coarse and transient. Earth, endued with those four properties, is gross; water, possessing them, is less so; fire, having two, is still less; and air, with one, is fine. Whether the same be admitted or denied with atoms, the argument is either way confuted: earthy particles, coarser than aërial, would not be minute in the utmost degree; or atoms possessing but a single property would not be like their effects, possessing several.

'The doctrine of atoms, therefore, is to be utterly rejected, having been by no venerable persons received, as the Sánkhya doctrine of matter, a plastic principle, has been, in fact, by Manu and other sages.' [1]

To confute a branch of the sect of Buddha, the Vedántins argue that 'the untruth or non-existence of external objects is an untenable position, for there is perception or apprehension of them—for instance, a stock, a wall, a jar, a cloth—and that which is actually apprehended cannot be unexistent. Nor does the existence of objects cease when the apprehension does so. Nor is it like a dream, a juggle, or an illusion; for the condition of dreaming and waking is quite different. When awake a person is aware of the illusory nature of the dream which he recollects.

[1] Colebrooke's 'Miscellaneous Essays,' pp. 411–413.

'Nor have thoughts or fancies an independent existence, for they are founded on external and sensible objects, the which, if unapprehended, imply that thoughts must be so too. These are momentary: and the same objections apply to a world consisting of momentary thoughts, as to one of instantaneous objects.

'The whole doctrine, when tried and sifted, crumbles like a well sunk in loose sand. The opinions advanced in it are contradictory and incompatible: they are severally untenable and incongruous. By teaching them to his disciples Buddha has manifested either his own absurdity and incoherence, or his rooted enmity to mankind, whom he sought to delude.'

To sum up as briefly as may be the thoroughly Pantheistic tenour of the Vedánta philosophy, we will give a short epitome of Mr. Colebrooke's recapitulation of the doctrines of that system:—The principal and essential tenets of the *Vedánta* are, that God is the omniscient and omnipotent cause of the universe. Creation is an act of His will. He is both efficient and material cause of the world: Creator and Nature, framer and frame, doer and deed. At the consummation of things all are resolved into Him: as the spider spins his thread from his own substance and gathers it in again, as vegetables sprout from the soil and return to it, earth to earth, and hair and nails grow from a living body and continue with it. The supreme Being is one, sole-existent, secondless, entire, without parts, sempiternal, infinite, ineffable, invariable ruler of all, universal soul, truth, wisdom, intelligence, happiness. Individual souls, emanating from the supreme One, are likened to innumerable sparks issuing from a blazing fire. From Him they proceed, and to Him they return, being of the same essence. The soul which governs the body together with its organs, neither is born; nor does it die. It is a portion of the divine substance, and as such infinite, immortal, intelligent, sentient, and true.

Subject to future transmigration, the soul visits other worlds, to receive there the recompense of works, or to suffer the penalty of misdeeds. Sinners fall to various regions of punishment. The virtuous rise to the moon, where they enjoy the fruit of their good actions, and whence they return to this world to animate new bodies and act in them, under Providence, conformably with their propensities and predispositions, the trace of which remains.

But the wise, liberated from worldly trammels, ascend yet higher, to the abode and court of Brahma ; or, if their attainment of wisdom be complete, they at once pass into a reunion with the Divine Essence.

CHAPTER V.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA.[1]

BEFORE we close this section, devoted to the consideration of Oriental Pantheism, it is necessary for us to devote one short chapter to a brief account of the Hindu philosophical poem entitled 'The Bhagavad-Gita,' in which the Oriental doctrines of Emanation and Pantheism are very clearly exhibited.

Both the authorship and date of this poem are very obscure; and I believe there is a divergence among critics of over a thousand years as to when it was written; not a few authorities placing it as late as the sixth century after Christ. However that may be, there seems to be little doubt that it was of considerably later origin than the Rig-Veda; and that in all probability it was written more recently than any of the philosophical systems of which we have as yet treated.

During this interval a new god has been apparently born into the mythology of India. He is named Krishna, or Kreeshna. 'And thou, Krishna, of the Yâdava race, having become the son of Aditi and being called Vishnu, the younger brother of Indra, the all-pervading, becoming a child, and vexer of thy foes, hast by thy energy traversed the sky, the atmosphere, and the earth in three strides.'

[1] For the materials of the above chapter I have availed myself largely, indeed almost verbally, of the abstract Mr. F. D. Maurice has made of the Bhagavad-Gita, as published in the first volume of his 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy.'

Yet upon closer examination we find that Krishna cannot properly be called a new god; he is only a new name, a more recent representation of the One God, the Pervading Presence, the Âtman or Self, of which we have treated in a former chapter. He is described as 'the soul of all; the omniscient, the all, the all-knowing, the vastest of the vast, the greatest of the great, the producer of all, the God whom the Goddess Devaki bore to Vishnu.' Elsewhere Krishna describes himself as being at the same time both the priest and the victim, and adds:[1] 'Know that Dharma (righteousness) is my beloved first-born mental son, whose nature is to have compassion on all creatures. In his character I exist among men, both present and past, passing through many varieties of mundane existence. I am Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, and the source as well as the destruction of things, the creator and the annihilator of the whole aggregate of existences. While all men live in unrighteousness, I, the unfailing, build up the bulwark of righteousness as the ages pass away.' And it is Kreeshna who is the prominent figure in the Bhagavad-Gita.

The tenets of this poem are supposed to be not entirely in accordance either with the Vedas or the Vedánta. The fundamental tenet, as opposed to the Vedánta, is that faith (*bhakti*) and not knowledge is the cause of liberation. *Bhakti* in the highest sense is defined as an 'affection fixed on God, and its characteristics differ from those of earthly affection in the object rather than in their nature. Knowledge and devout concentration are aids to faith, but they are not faith itself, and to mistake knowledge to be the pursuit of man is to confuse the means with the end. So that the doctrines of the Bhagavad-Gita may be regarded more in the light of an extension than of a contradiction of the Vedánta. The highest form of faith is properly directed to Krishna, who is considered as identical with the Supreme Being, the impersonal Brahma, although he,

[1] 'Mythology of the Aryan Nations,' by Rev. G. W. Cox, vol. ii. p. 131.

in common with other gods of the Hindu mythology, manifests himself at different times, under various forms.

The Bhagavad-Gita consists principally of a series of lessons or lectures, in which Krishna instructs his hearer, who is called Arjoon, in such duties as are necessary to salvation.

The scene opens on a field of battle. The Kooroos and the Pandoos, kindred tribes, are about to engage in a deadly war. Arjoon is one of the heroes of the Pandoos; he is standing in a chariot drawn by white horses. Near him is the divine Kreeshna, of whom at present we must only say that he is the mysterious counsellor of the prince. What his offices and nature are he himself will tell us by and by.

Arjoon is looking on with dismay and horror upon a battle in which there are uncles, cousins, sons, brothers, and bosom friends on both sides. He thinks there can be no happiness for him hereafter if he should be the murderer of people of his own race. Such a crime is likely to destroy the virtue of the whole family or tribe. Hell is threatened by the Sankar both to those who fall and those who survive. The chief sits down in the chariot between the two armies and casts away his bow and arrows. The divine adviser reproves him for his weakness. It is his duty to fight. 'Tell me what I shall do,' cries the young man. 'I am confounded between *two* duties. I am overcome with the dread of sin. I see nothing to appease my grief though I were to rule the earth or the hosts of heaven.'

Then Kreeshna instructs him in the nature of the soul. Arjoon may go to the fight, for the soul neither killeth nor is killed. You cannot say of it, it hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter. It is a thing without birth; it is ancient, constant, and eternal. As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, so the soul, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are

new. The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away. It is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible; it is universal, permanent, immovable. The former state of being is unknown; the middle state is evident; the future state is not to be discovered. The duty of thy tribe is to fight; a soldier of the Kshatree tribe has no higher duty.

The belief of the soul's immortality is thus connected with the practice of life. But is not that dread which Arjoon had of further consequences a reasonable one? Kreeshna intimates to him that it is not. The people who held out that kind of notion of reward and punishment looked for transient enjoyment in heaven, not for eternal absorption. The Veds, which seem to encourage it, are adapted to men in a threefold condition. Turn to spiritual things, be firm in the higher path, and you will be free from care and trouble about the future, as about the present. Consider the deed and not the event; let not the motive for action be the hope of reward. Yet let not thy life be spent in inaction. Perform thy duty; abandon all thought of the consequences; seek an asylum in wisdom alone. Men who are endued with true wisdom are unmindful of good or evil in this world. They who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions are freed from the chains of birth and go to the regions of eternal happiness.

Arjoon wishes to know something more of the Moonee, or thoroughly wise man. Kreeshna answers, 'The wisdom of that man is established, who, like the tortoise, can draw in all his members and restrain them from their wonted purposes. The tumultuous senses hurry away by force the heart even of him who striveth to restrain them. The inspired man, trusting in me, may quell them and be happy. Such a one walketh in the night, when all things go to rest; he sleepeth in the day, the time when all things wake. A man trusting in the Supreme goeth not astray;

at the hour of death he shall mix with the incorporeal nature of Brahm.'

The subject of the relation of thought to action still engages Arjoon's mind, and gives occasion for another lecture from Kreeshna. In the course of it Arjoon asks how man is led to commit offences; it seems as if, contrary to his wishes, he was compelled by some secret force. 'It is the enemy, lust or passion,' replies the teacher, 'insatiable and full of sin, by which this world is covered, as the flame by the smoke, as the sword by rust, or as the fœtus by its membrane. This inveterate foe, in the shape of desire, raging like fire and hard to be appeased, obscures the understanding of the wise man. This destroyer of wisdom and knowledge must be subdued. It is possible, for though the organs are great the mind is greater; the resolution is greater than the mind, and there is one greater than that. When thou hast resolved what is superior to the resolution, and fixed thyself by thyself, then determine to abandon inclination or desire, thy great enemy.'

There is a deep mystery in the last sentence. Who is this that is superior to the resolution in man? All the discipline seems to depend on this question. Kreeshna says that he taught it to one and another in former days; that it was handed down to the Rajarshees, and lost. 'But how is this,' asks Arjoon, 'when thou, Kreeshna, hast come later into life than some of those to whom thou hast imparted this secret?' 'Both I and thou,' answers Kreeshna, 'have passed many births; mine are known to me, but thou knowest not of thine. Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, yet, as I have command over my own nature, I am made evident by my power. When there is a decline of virtue in the world I make myself manifest; I appear from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the re-establishment of virtue.' Two kinds of worship are pointed out: those who acknowledge Kreeshna do not when they quit their mortal

frames enter into another, but into him. On the other hand, there are those who seek success for their works in this life; they worship the Devatas (demons or angels). The true Kreeshna worshipper seeks rest in action and action in rest; he performs all duties; yet he, as it were, does nothing; he seeks no reward—he is pleased with whatever he may by chance obtain; he is freed from the bonds of action—the same in prosperity and adversity. God is attained by him who maketh God alone the object of his works. There are various modes of worship, all purifying; but the worship of spiritual wisdom is far better than the worshipping with offerings of things. In wisdom is to be found every work. Seek this wisdom with prostrations, with questions, and with attention; then thou wilt not again fall into folly, thou wilt behold all nature in me. Although thou wert the greatest of offenders, thou shalt be able to cross the gulf of sin with the barque of wisdom. There is not anything to be compared in this world with wisdom and purity. He who is perfected by practice in due time findeth it in his own soul. He who has faith finds wisdom. The ignorant and the man whose spirit is full of doubt is lost. Those (continues the teacher) whose understandings are in the Deity, whose souls are in him, whose asylum is in him, are by wisdom purified from their offences, and go whence they shall never return. The learned behold him alike in the reverent Brahmin perfected in knowledge, in the ox, in the elephant, in the dog, and in him who eateth of the flesh of dogs. Those whose minds are fixed on this equality gain eternity even in this world.

The next lecture on the subject of the exercises of the soul works out the same idea in a number of forms. To the Yogi, or devout man, it is said gold, iron, and stones are the same; he is the same with those who love him and those who hate, in the company of saints or sinners. 'He delighteth in his own soul; he is in God and free from sin; he believes in unity and worships me present in all things,

and dwelleth in me altogether, even on this earth.' In the course of this conversation Arjoon asks, 'Whither, O Kreeshna, doth the man go after death who, although he be endued with faith, hath not obtained perfection in his devotion; because his unsubdued mind wandered from the discipline, doth he come to nothing?' Kreeshna answers, 'No man who hath done good goeth unto an evil place. A man whose devotions have been broken off by death, having enjoyed for many years the reward of his virtues in the region above, is at length born into some holy family; he is endued with the same degree of application that he held in his former body, and he begins again to labour for perfection.'

But, after all, who is Kreeshna? The question has already been awakened in Arjoon's mind; he has arrived at the stage of discipline when it may be answered. 'I,' says the teacher, 'am the creation and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is not anything greater than I; all things hang on me, even as precious gems upon a string; I am moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, invocation in the Veds, sound in the firmament, sweet-smelling savour in the earth, glory in the source of light. I am life in all things, and zeal in the zealous. I am the eternal seed of nature. I am the understanding of the wise, the glory of the proud, the strength of the strong; free from lust and anger. There is a supernatural influence which bewilders the wretched, the foolish, and the low-minded, and hinders them from coming to me. I am not in these, though they proceed from me. Many seek me, but the wise man is constantly engaged in my service; I esteem the wise man as myself, for his spirit dependeth on me alone. Those who worship the Devatas go to them; those who worship me alone, go to me. The ignorant, who are unacquainted with my supreme nature, which is superior to all things, believe me, who am invisible, to exist in the visible forms in which they see me. I know all the things that have

been, that are, that shall be; but there is not one amongst them that knoweth me. Those who trust in me know Brahm, the supreme and incorruptible; they know the emanations from which natural things are generated; they know the destroying nature. In this body I am the teacher of worship. He who thinks constantly of me will find me. He who finds me returns not again to mortal birth. The universe exists, dissolves, is reproduced; there is an incorruptible abode which is my mansion. The supreme Being is obtained by him who worshippeth no other gods; in him is included all nature. By him all things are spread abroad. I (continues Kreeshna) am the sacrifice; I am the worship, I am the spices, I am the fire, I am the victim, I am the father and mother of this world; I am the road of the good, the comforter, the creator, the witness, the asylum, the friend. They who serve other gods with a firm belief, in doing so involuntarily worship me. I am the same to all mankind. They who serve me in adoration are in me. If one whose ways are ever so evil serve me alone, he becometh of a virtuous spirit, and obtaineth eternal happiness. Even women and the tribes of Visya and Soodra shall go to the supreme journey if they take sanctuary with me; how much more my holy servants the Brahmins and Rajarshees! Consider this world as a finite and joyless place, and serve me.'

Arjoon begins to regard his teacher with wonder and adoration. He is taught that reason, knowledge, clear judgment, patience, truth, humility, meekness, birth, death, fear, courage, zeal, renown, and infamy all come from him. He is the soul which standeth in the bodies of all beings; he is the chief of all warriors, floods, animals; the Himalaya among mountains, the Ganges among rivers, the science in sciences, the spring among seasons, gaming amongst frauds, the rod and policy among rulers. 'Amongst the secret I am silent, amongst the wise I am wisdom.'

All these are the forms of Kreeshna. Arjoon aspires

to see his never-failing spirit. A mysterious revelation is granted. The pupil is overwhelmed with rapture and terror. He sees all creation proceeding from Kreeshna—swallowed up in him. With this vision is mingled one of the army by which he is surrounded. As troops of insects with increasing speed seek their own destruction in the flaming fire; as the rapid streams of flowing rivers roll on to meet the ocean's bed, so these heroes of the human race are rushing on towards the flaming mouth of the Divine Being. The whole world is filled with his grandeur. Kreeshna is the destroyer as well as the creator! Not one of these warriors save Arjoon is to live. They are already destroyed by the divine power. Let him put forth his hand and be the immediate agent of their death. On to the battle!

But Arjoon's terror increases. He bows down before him whom he had called Kreeshna and friend. 'I was ignorant,' he says, 'of thy greatness; I was blinded by my affection and presumption; I have trifled with thee; I crave thy forgiveness. Thou art the Father of all things, animate and inanimate; the sage instructor of the whole, worthy to be adored. Bear with me as a father with his son, a friend with a friend, a lover with his beloved. I am pleased to behold things never before seen, but my mind is in awful fear.' He is bidden not to be disturbed, nor to let his faculties be confounded. The god assumes his benignant human shape. Arjoon is at peace.

After this wonderful discovery of himself, and some discourse upon the method in which he is to be served in his visible and invisible nature, Kreeshna proceeds to answer some of his pupil's more difficult questions. First, what is Kshetra, or body? It consists of the five elements (earth, air, fire, water, and ether) consciousness, understanding spirit, the eleven organs, the power of the five senses, love and hatred, pleasure and pain, sensibility and firmness. Secondly, what is wisdom? It is freedom from self-

esteem, hypocrisy, and injustice; patience, rectitude, respect for masters and teachers; exemption from attachment to children, wife, and home; evenness of temper upon the arrival of every event, whether longed for or not; freedom from pride, worship paid to Kreeshna alone, love of solitude, constant study of the superior Spirit. Thirdly, what is Gnea, or the object of wisdom? It is that which hath no beginning and is supreme, which can neither be called being or not being; it is all hands and feet; it is all faces, heads, and eyes; it is all ear; it sitteth in the midst of the world; without organs, it is the reflected light of every faculty of the organs; connected with nothing, it containeth all things; without quality it partaketh of every quality. It is the inside and outside, the movable and immovable of all nature. It standeth at a distance, yet it is present; it is undivided, yet in all things it standeth divided. It is the ruler of all things; it is the light in light, and it is declared to be free from darkness.

There are two other principles which Kreeshna declares to be without beginning: Prakreetee and Pooroost. The former would seem to be the mere instrument or agent in man; the other the directing power in him. All things, animate and inanimate, are declared to be produced from the union of Kshetra and Kshetra-gna. 'I,' says Kreeshna, 'am the Kshetra-gna in every mortal frame—the living power which directs it.'

From Prakreetee, or Nature, three Goon or qualities proceed: the truth quality, the passionate quality, the dark quality. The Satwa-goon, or truth quality, leads to wisdom; the Raja-goon, or passionate quality, to ambition and covetousness; the Tama-goon, or dark quality, to madness, distraction, and ignorance. Those who are ruled by the first mount on high; the second stay in the middle; the last sink below. But the soul must arise above all these qualities into a Being who is superior to them before he can drink of the water of immortality.

How this ascent is to be obtained —how a man is to rise above the particular Pooroosh, or soul, into the Pooroshottama, or supreme soul, is the next subject of Kreeshna's teaching, of which we need not speak, as it has been anticipated in several of the previous lectures.

An important subject remains to be discussed. The belief of the three different qualities evidently presumes the existence of a different destiny for the different creatures which are endued with them. This principle is now distinctly affirmed. 'The Divine destiny is for absorption into the Divine nature; the evil destiny confines the soul to mortal birth. Those who are born under the influence of the evil destiny know not what it is to proceed in virtue or recede in vice. They say the world is without beginning and without end,—without an Eeswar, or divine light; that all things are conceived by the junction of the sexes. These men say the gratification of their sensual appetites is the supreme good; they say, "This to-day hath been acquired by me, and this I shall have also. I am powerful, I am happy, I am rich; I am endued with precedence among men. Where is there another like me? I will make presents at the feast and be merry." Such men are self-conceited, stubborn, and ever in pursuit of wealth and pride. They worship nominally and hypocritically. They place their trust in pride and power; they hate me in themselves and in others; wherefore I cast them down into the wombs of evil spirits and unclean beasts. They go from birth to birth; at length, not finding me, they go into the most infernal regions. There are three ways to these: lust, anger, and avarice. Avoiding these gates of sin, thou wilt go the journey of the Most High.'

Distinction of qualities leads to a distinction in the kinds of faith or worship. All worship; but the nature and object of the worship are determined by their different qualities. The worship which is guided by divine precepts, without the desire of reward, and with an attentive

mind, is of the Satwa-goon. That which is performed irregularly, without regard to the precepts of the law, without the distribution of bread, without the usual invocations, without gifts to the Brahmin at the conclusion, and without faith, is of the Raja-goon. That which is performed with a view to the fruit and with hypocrisy is of the Tama-goon. Whatever is performed without faith—whether it be sacrifices, deeds of charity, or mortification of the flesh—is called Asat, and is not for this world nor that which is above. These same qualities exhibit themselves in works. He who has the Satwa-goon forsakes the fruit of action, but not action itself. He who has the Raja-goon forsakes the work because it is painful; he who has the Tama-goon neglects action through folly and distraction of mind. So of wisdom: the wisdom of the Satwa-goon sees one infinite principle in nature; the wisdom of the Raja-goon sees manifold principles prevailing in nature; the wisdom of the Tama-goon sees only self-interest in all things. So of pleasure: the pleasure which a man enjoys from his labour, and wherein he finds the end of his pains, that which is in the beginning is as poison, and in the end is as the water of life, is of the Satwa-goon: this arises from the consent of the understanding. The pleasure which arises from the mere meeting of the organs with their objects, which in the beginning is as sweet as the water of life, and in the end is a poison, is of the Raja-goon. The pleasure, which in the beginning and end tends to stupify the soul, is of the Tama-goon. There is not anything, Kreeshna declares, in heaven or earth which is free from these three qualities.

Upon these qualities depend the respective duties of the four tribes of Brahmin, Kshatree, Visya, and Soodra. The natural duties of the Brahmin are peace, self-restraint, zeal, purity, patience, rectitude, learning, theology. The natural duties of the Kshatru are bravery, glory, rectitude, not to fly from the field, generosity, princely conduct. The natural duty of the Visya is to cultivate the lands, tend the

cattle, and buy and sell. The natural duty of the Soodra is servitude. A man who is contented with his own particular lot and duty obtaineth perfection, for he offers his own works to that Being from whom the principles of all beings proceed. The duty of a man's own calling is far preferable to the duty of another, let it be ever so well pursued. A man's own calling, with all its faults, ought not to be forsaken. 'With thy heart place all thy works in me; by so doing thou shalt surmount every difficulty. But if through pride thou wilt not listen to my words, thou wilt undoubtedly be lost. From a confidence in thyself thou mayest think thou wilt not fight. This is a fallacious determination, for the principles of thy nature will impel thee; thou wilt do that through necessity which thou seekest through ignorance to avoid.'

This conclusion, though perfectly in accordance with the commencement of the story, and giving it a unity, may seem inconsistent with what has been said of the special glory of the Brahmin. But Kreeshna adds, 'Eeswar resideth in the bosom of every mortal being, revolving with his supernatural power the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him upon all occasions, oh! offspring of Bahrat; by his divine pleasure thou shalt obtain supreme happiness and an eternal abode.'

BOOK THE SECOND

GREEK PANTHEISM

They felt
A Spiritual Presence, oft-times misconceived,
But still a high dependence, a divine
Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
With joy and gratitude, and fear and love;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise
That through the desert rang. Though favoured less,
Far less than these, yet such in their degree
Were those bewildered pagans of old time.—WORDSWORTH.

They taught that narrow views betray to misery:
That wise it is to comprehend the whole:
That God and Nature our attention claim;
That Nature is the glass reflecting God,
As by the sea reflected is the sun
Too glorious to be gazed on in his sphere:
That mind immortal loves immortal aims;
That boundless mind affects a boundless space.
That vast surveys and the sublime of things
The soul assimilate, and make her great:
That, therefore, heaven her glories, as a fund
Of inspiration, thus spreads out to man.
Such are their doctrines; such the night inspired.
And what more true? . . . . . .
I meet the Deity in every view,
And tremble at my nakedness before Him.—YOUNG.

CHAPTER I.

THE IONIAN SCHOOL.

FROM our earliest childhood we have generally been taught to regard the Hebrews as those to whom we owe all our knowledge of theology and religion; in a great measure even our knowledge of God Himself. We have been taught to regard the Greeks as those from whom we have gained all our acquaintance with the arts and sciences, philosophy, and to a certain extent all that is commonly comprised within the word Wisdom. And in like manner it is upon the Romans we have been told to look as upon those from whom we have gained all our notions of discipline and law. As regards our relations to the Hebrews and Romans, the definition is fairly correct. Not so with the Greeks. There is, indeed, a certain superficial accuracy about the statement. We do, of course, owe a good deal of our knowledge and learning to the Greeks. But where the definition is erroneous is this: it leads us to imply from it that the Greeks were the first people who cultivated the love of learning for its own sake; that they gained their knowledge from no other nations, but were the authors of it themselves. It might almost lead us to imply they were the first people who had ever attained any degree of civilisation.

The slightest acquaintance with Egyptian or Hindoo history is sufficient to make us detect such an obvious fallacy, and lead us readily to discredit the assertion. The

civilisation of Egypt goes so far back in the world's history that it is almost impossible to say when it began. It is almost generally acknowledged now that Moses gained the greater portion of his knowledge from his connection with the Egyptians; and in that case even our first ideas of religion may be traced to an Egyptian source.

It is only of late years we have been able to gain any real knowledge of Egypt, through our ignorance of its sacred symbolical writing or hieroglyphs; and even now our knowledge of those characters is all but infinitesimal. Yet all seem agreed that at the dawn of European civilisation Egypt was no longer in the zenith of her greatness. At the first historical appearance of the country of the Nile she is hoary and venerable with age. We have some knowledge of what she was in her old age; but of what she was in the full glory and prime of her maturity remains still for the labours of scholars to discover. Yet even the little we do know fills us with utter amazement at the wonderful degree of knowledge and art to which the Egyptians had attained. The Great Pyramid was built more than three thousand years before the birth of Christ, yet still is it in existence. And so accurately was it planned and constructed, that at this day the variation of the compass may actually be determined by the position of its sides. At the time of Abraham, when he and his countrymen were still living and moving about in tents and waggons, the Egyptians were living in cities. At that time also they had already cultivated agriculture and parcelled out their valley into farms. They had invented records, and wrote their kings' names and actions on the massive temples which they had raised. They had built the obelisk at Heliopolis, the temple at Karnak; most probably, too, the wonderful Sphinx was at this time carved. The decimal and duodecimal systems of arithmetic were in use; the arts necessary in hydraulic engineering, massive architecture, and the ascertainment of the boundaries of land had

reached no small degree of perfection. The columns which upheld their temples are the models from which the Greeks afterwards copied. Their statues, though not always considered graceful, are grand and simple, free from false ornament, and often colossal. Their wealth was proverbial with the neighbouring nations; and the remaining monuments of their magnificence prove that at this time Egypt was a highly civilised country, to which its neighbours looked up with wonder.

At the time of Abraham it was divided into several little kingdoms, whose boundaries cannot now be exactly known. In the valley to the south of Silsilis was the kingdom of Elephantine. Next was the kingdom of Thebes, which, perhaps, included all the valley to the east of the river. On the west of the river was the kingdom of Abydos. There was also the kingdom of Memphis, embracing the western half of the Delta, which in the reign of Suphis had been strong enough to conquer Thebes; so that henceforth the kingdoms of Memphis and Thebes became united. We have, of course, no means of reckoning the ages during which civilisation was slowly making these steps of improvement; and it is only by the comparison of Egypt with other nations that we can attain even a proximate knowledge of her great antiquity. The Jewish nation was weak and struggling before the reign of David. The history of Greece begins with the Trojan War. But before the time of David, and before the Trojan War, the power and glory of Thebes had already passed away. Well might the Egyptian priests say to the earliest Greek philosophers: 'You Greeks are mere children, talkative and vain; you know nothing at all of the past.'

Yet few things, perhaps, can acquaint us so certainly with the superiority the East had over the West in the antiquity of her civilisation as a comparison between their religions. From the fact of it being now obsolete it is not easy to acquaint ourselves exactly with the religion of

Egypt. That idol-worship and consultation of oracles was conceded to the populace there is little doubt. But there is also little doubt that the popular religion was not believed in by the more educated and intelligent of the Egyptians. As far as we can discover, the religion of the higher classes in Egypt consisted of an abstract and highly refined Pantheism. But our knowledge of their religion is necessarily slight. They have left no books; so that all we can know of it has to be gained from pyramids, tombs, and statues, already deciphered or yet to be deciphered.

In Hindostan we come again into the world of books. We find ourselves among a literary people, literary by profession. We know far more of what the Hindoo has thought than of what he has done. And, indeed, considering them generally, the Hindoos may be regarded as a religious, contemplative, and philosophical race, far more than an active, warlike, or historical race. In former chapters we have already described the principal Hindoo religions: the Vedas; Buddhism; we have given an abstract of the Bhagavad-gita. No thoughtful person can acquaint himself with these religions without feeling they must have been the product of a rarely cultured and refined race. Turn from the highly abstract philosophy of Buddhism or from the pure morality of the Bhagavad-gita to the Greek fables and mythology, and, in point both of intellect and morality, the contrast would not be more startling if we were to turn from the best and highest phases of Christianity to the lowest and most base forms of Fetichism, from which the African races are now but barely emerging.

Men are always prone to create their gods in the images of themselves; and if we would acquaint ourselves with the qualities by which a nation is principally characterised, we cannot do better than seek them in the qualities which characterise that nation's god. Not so much for the natural and somewhat obvious reason that a devotee will always

endeavour to imitate the highest qualities of his god, in order to gain his approbation and become as much like him as it is possible for a mere mortal to resemble his divinity. This is, of course, one reason. But a stronger reason lies in the fact, that a race must have previously prized those qualities, or it would not have endowed its god with them. Having once endowed him with them, the qualities of the god and the disciple act and re-act one upon the other. For, however perfect the disciple may be in his possession of certain qualities, he can never reach such a degree of perfection in them but that it is quite possible for him to believe his god possesses them in a still higher degree of perfection. Consciously or unconsciously, a nation always endows its god with the qualities it prizes most in itself.[1] In India, pure and refined intelligence

[1] In the above passage I have stated, in general terms, my belief that the qualities of every nation may be known by the qualities with which that nation endows its god. I believe this is true, and will always be found to be the case. It is right, however, for me to say how far and in what measure I believe this statement will be found to be correct. It is only true when the nation has never seen the being it worships, and is, therefore, forced to endow him with the qualities it prizes most in itself. It is *not* true in cases where the being worshipped has actually lived upon the earth, and, consequently, possessed real virtue and qualities of his own. It is not true, for instance, in the case of Christ. He stands out a solitary isolated character of such rare beauty among His contemporaries, that they did not prize Him and did not understand Him; and, therefore, it would have been impossible for them to have endowed Him with such qualities as He actually possessed. The majority hated Him and killed Him; and even His disciples (with the exception, perhaps, of those who were in daily communion with Him) understood Him but little. As the centuries passed away, and the living Christ faded from remembrance, men understood Him less and less; gradually they grew to completely *mis*understand him. Nothing can strike the impartial student of history more curiously than the fact of a God and the disciples of that God being so singularly unlike each other as they were in the Middle Ages. Both the character and doctrine of Christ were eminently those of peace, and love, and practical good works. Yet for centuries the disciples of Christ believed they were doing Him greatest honour and service by asceticism, religious wars, and atrocious persecutions. The reason of this strange diversity and contrast is to be found most probably in the fact that that portion of Europe which was in possession of Christianity was not sufficiently advanced in civilisation to be able to profit by the sublime teaching of Christ. His character and doctrines

constitutes the god. In Persia Ormuzd, the good god, is symbolised by light and goodness always warring with Ahriman, or darkness and evil. In Greece we have a multitude of divinities, endowed for the most part with great physical beauty, but whose principal mental characteristic seems to consist of a sort of low Cunning.

We are all, of course, familiar with stories told of the adulteries and lusts, the rapes and murders supposed to have been committed by the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology. But if we examine carefully the myths and legends we shall find that the keynote of all the actions consists in a sort of craftiness. The gods of Greece do not merely try to cheat and 'take in' unhappy mortals, but they are continually represented as endeavouring to overreach each other.

I am not ignorant of the fact that many authorities and scholars believe there is a much deeper and graver meaning symbolised by all these legends than at first appears. They believe them to be the figments, the raiments or garments, so to speak, with which a poetical

being so well known, it was useless for them to attempt to endow Him with qualities more pleasing to themselves. As it was, they did their best to pervert all passages capable of perversion. If Christ had not actually lived in the sight of men; if His sayings and doings had not been sacredly preserved; if it had been possible to endow Him with imaginary qualifications, the Christian God of the Middle Ages would have been, both in point of morality and intellect, very little above the Fetish of the Africans.

As it was, however, these so-called Christians managed to meet the anthropomorphic savagery of the times. They could not completely pervert the character of Christ, because the real character, in all its truth and beauty, was preserved in the historical records. They, therefore, changed Christ into the Mediator between God and man, and were thus enabled to endow that God with all the malicious devilry they delighted themselves to practise. The eternal hell, with its torments and flames; the condemnation—condemnation, be it remembered, foreseen and preordained,—of innocent beings, such as unbaptized infants, or of persons who had died in ignorance of Christ, and who, in consequence, by no possible means could have believed in him; all this is fitly represented in the conduct of the believers in such a God. The racking and tortures, starvation and imprisonments, all bear witness to the fact that if a nation is bloodthirsty and brutal, the God of that nation will be represented bloodthirsty and brutal also.

people would naturally clothe its highest thoughts. It may be so. Yet it seems to me that if the Greeks did share any of the higher thoughts in common with other nations, they shared it in such a way that it would be hardly incorrect to say it was the outside shell alone that fell to their lot. They had never possessed the kernel; nay, they had never so much as seen the kernel, and knew not what it was like. They may have had certain words in common with other nations, but failed to discern the true meaning and representation of such words. Take, for instance, the word Light. That word, which with the Buddhists and Brahmans signified a pure intelligence by which our intellects should be cleared and enlightened—that word, which in Persia meant an intense utter goodness, brightening and invigorating our hearts, lightening us on the way of life, helping us to avoid the path of darkness or evil—that word, which in our own religion is used as emblematical of a high moral example—that same word Light was also employed by the Greeks; but no longer employed in the abstract symbolical meaning of Eastern religions. With them light did not mean pure intelligence or moral worth; it merely meant a radiant, sensuous brightness. At first it was represented by the sun. But it was quickly personified into a beautiful bright being, with a quiver and a bow, and a lyre, at the sound of which cities spring up, and men are brought into harmony and peace. This radiant being is named Apollo. He appears to be the central figure in Greek mythology, round which the others have disposed themselves. He is the son of Zeus, the Lord of All, who, in his turn, is represented as dwelling on a high Thessalian hill, issuing his thunders and sending out decrees amidst a council of his chiefs.

But it is not my intention to enter into the details of Grecian mythology. It is a subject with which every schoolboy is acquainted, and well-nigh every schoolgirl. And indeed it has often been to me a matter of surprise

that a knowledge of heathen mythology should be deemed in ordinary education a matter of such importance. An average schoolboy, who would be ashamed of avowing any ignorance of the Greek legends, would not shrink from owning he knows nothing of Buddhism beyond its name; and he must be more than ordinarily well educated if he have heard even so much as the name of the Vedas. Why should this be so? Surely we ought to know more of India than we do of Greece. Our connection with it; the fact that such a large proportion of its inhabitants are British subjects; even more, our knowledge that it is to that country so many men of the upper middle classes turn in search of a livelihood: all these practical reasons should make us think it worth our while to acquaint the growing boy with some knowledge of the country that will probably be of so much importance to him. But there are other reasons, graver and higher in their aim, although perhaps not of so much practical importance. The Hindoo lived in a world of thought. No race shows more clearly than does the Hindoo that eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, do not form the be-all and end-all of existence. The one aim and wish of the Hindoo in this life is for divine intercourse with Brahm, or God; his highest ideal of a future life lies in the belief that he will be re-absorbed into the god from whom he has been only temporarily separated. Surely the high intelligence of Buddhism, or the pure morality of the Bhagavad-gita, would impress and educate the young mind more than the wild tales of the heathen mythology taught him in such a way that the higher meaning (if there be a higher meaning) is wholly lost to him; he only feels that the tales and legends of the Greeks are quite as improbable and not nearly so interesting as the fairy tales of his childhood; and as he grows older he finds that legends, which he at one time merely thought to be trashy, are in reality not only trashy, but immoral and indecent.

Upon the whole, then, we must admit that, just as the religion of India indicates a highly refined and cultured state, so in like manner does the mythology of Greece indicate a state utterly barbarous and savage; a state so completely wanting in the ordinary feelings of morality that men were not ashamed to impute to their gods crimes of such utter abomination that the description of them would hardly be permitted in a modern book. In the earlier mythology there is little beyond an account of the doings of the various gods and goddesses; doings that were either unmentionably vile, or else were so puerile that one wonders how even the early Greeks could have invented such trivialities. It was not until a considerably later period, that allegorical phantasms, such as Death, and Sleep, and Dreams, were introduced; and most probably such alterations and improvements owe their origin to the fact of the Greeks having come in contact with nations older and more advanced in the arts of civilisation than themselves.

Of course, it is needless to say, it is not in a religion like this that we can look for any traces of Pantheism. In an age when men peopled all parts of the universe with their numerous divinities, all warring against and seeking to overreach one another, it would have been impossible for them to have attained any abstract ideas. It would have been impossible for them to have imagined, even in the faintest degree, that the whole world, and the sky, and the ocean, were all and each pervaded by one and the same Spirit, whose outward manifestation took the form of the entire universe. It would have been almost as difficult for them to have imagined this, as it would have been difficult for them to have imagined that the phenomena of the rising and setting of the sun, the phenomena of growth and decay, of thunder and lightning, nay, the phenomena of the whole universe, were all of them results of one and the same force, manifesting itself in different modes; that they

all owed their origin to invariable law, and had nothing to do with the wills of capricious beings dwelling within them or outside of them.

Whence, then, came it that Greece in a few short years, not numbering many hundreds, should have sprung from this childish state of ignorance into a state in which she could rank, both commercially and philosophically, as one of the leading powers, or indeed it would be more just to say *the* leading power of the entire world? I believe this sudden increase of knowledge, and consequent increase of power, almost entirely owes its origin to one momentous event—the opening of the Egyptian ports in the year B.C. 670. Before this period the inhabitants of Egypt had been shut out from all Mediterranean or European contact by a rigorous exclusion exceeding that until lately practised in China and Japan. Nothing, indeed, is much more curious than the complete and forced state of ignorance in which we are compelled to remain about Upper Egypt, owing to this early rigorous exclusion. We cannot fix the date, scarcely, indeed, the proximate date, when Thebes ceased to be the capital of Egypt. We do not even know the reason *why* it ceased so to be. We can only suppose that its fall and want of records were occasioned and accompanied by civil war. During the past centuries of Theban greatness, the country was little known either to the Jews or the Greeks, the two people in whose writings we should naturally seek for information. In the Hebrew Scriptures Upper Egypt is hardly mentioned; and by the Greeks it was only spoken of with ignorant wonder. In the 'Iliad' Thebes is called the richest city in the world. To the European the Valley of the Nile was a region of mysteries and marvels. But to Homer, in particular, it was wholly in the world of fable, far beyond the reach of knowledge. It was called the birthplace of some of the Greek divinities; and it was with the righteous Ethiopians, or people of the

Thebaid, that Jupiter and his family were believed to be spending their twelve days' holiday when the Greeks fighting before the walls of Troy thought their prayers were unheard. In the 'Odyssey' we are told that Neptune visited the same country and dined with these Ethiopians, whilst the other gods were absent in Jupiter's palace on Mount Olympus; but nothing is mentioned to show that the poet knew anything of the places he was writing about. Hesiod also, when speaking of Memnon, King of Ethiopia (by whom he probably meant Miamun Rameses II.), calls him the son of the goddess Aurora. Everything in Egypt was seen by the Greeks enlarged through the mists of distance, and coloured by the poetic fancy of ignorance. The theogony of Homer is extended by Hesiod in many essential points. There are new fictions and new personages; but the fables of the one author are nearly as absurd as the fables of the other.

All invention of further fables, however, was virtually put an end to when the ports of Egypt were thrown open by the order of Psammetichus, B.C. 670. The ancient system of isolation which had been for so many thousand years the policy of Egypt was now overthrown. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the influence of this event upon the progress of Europe. How was it possible that all the marvels of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the sorcerers, enchanters, giants, and monsters of the deep, should survive, when those seas were daily crossed in all directions? What was a pious historian like Herodotus to think when he found that, at the very period when he had supposed a superhuman state of things in his native country, the ordinary passage of affairs was taking place on the banks of the Nile? To the opening of the Egyptian ports, then, may be attributed two important events, directly influencing the civilisation of Greece, indirectly influencing the civilisation well-nigh of the whole world. The first of

these events was the gradual disbelief in the old mythology; the second was the commencement of Greek philosophy consequent on that gradual disbelief.

It is true that the Greek religion survived for many a long year after the opening of the Egyptian ports; but it is none the less true that it was at that period it received its death-blow. The blow may require a long period of time in working out its results; but death, the result, will come at last, and will have for its origin no other cause than that same blow given so many years before. Men will not discard in a day the religion that has lasted them for years. As history has shown us again and again (never, perhaps, more strongly than in this nineteenth century in which we are living), men will not drop a treasured religion without reluctance, without having tried their utmost to shield it from the merciless hands of time and progress. At first they try to reconcile their religion with the growing knowledge of the day; they endeavour to make a compromise between their science and their religion. Of the legends and fables some will be allegorised, some will be modified, some repudiated. Gradually the more educated quietly and somewhat sadly drop all belief in them, yet still fondly hope that the lower classes will continue to hold to them. A Socrates receives the popular faith in all silence. A Plato regards it as a breach of public and patriotic duty to disbelieve the faith of his country. It is in vain, however. Plaister and bind up the wound as we may, it is a deadly wound and is still there. The effects may be delayed by our tender care, but come they must, sooner or later. The death-blow has been given, and the death itself will surely follow. The death-blow, then, as we have said, of Grecian mythology, and of Grecian ignorance, was dealt when the Egyptians opened wide their ports, when they threw down their ancient system of isolation, when they allowed strangers to benefit by all their stored-up knowledge, the accumulation of thousands of years. The ports were thrown

open in 670 B.C. Thirty years after that critical event was born Thales, the first of those four philosophers who are considered by most historians to constitute the Ionian School. It was a favourite practice in old digests of philosophy to speak of Thales as referring all things to water; Anaximander, to earth; Anaximenes, to air; Heraclitus, to fire. Thus the so-called four elements were amicably apportioned among four Ionic teachers. In more learned and more modern treatises, the natural philosophers of Greece are divided into the dynamical and mechanical, Thales being assigned to the former class, his immediate successor, Anaximander, to the second; whence it is concluded they could not have stood to each other in the relation of master and disciple. And indeed it would not be correct to describe either of these four philosophers as disciples one of the other, inasmuch as they were all radically opposed in their opinions of what they considered to be the first principle in Nature. Still they were so far alike in that they did each of them endeavour to find a first principle. These four may claim the honour of having been the first Greeks who set themselves to investigate and study the order of Nature. And although to us, who are living in an enlightened century like the present, their speculations, of course, appear wonderfully crude, we must not refuse to render them all honour and gratitude; for their crude speculations may be considered the germs out of which all modern science and philosophy have sprung. Yet even in our gratitude to them we must not forget that after all these men would have never been what they were if the Egyptians had not opened their ports, and thus afforded a possibility of intercourse between the two nations.

Thales was born in or about the year 639 B.C. He was a citizen of Miletus, and a Phœnician by descent. There were very opposite reports current respecting him. Some said that he bought up the oil-presses just before the olive season, that he might show how easily a wise man

could make himself rich; others told of his falling into a pit while he was looking at the stars, and of his being mocked by an old woman for knowing that which was over his head so much better than that which lay at his feet. He is said to have predicted the solar eclipse which terminated a battle between the Medes and Lydians, but it has been suggestively remarked it is not stated that he predicted the day on which it should occur. Many anecdotes such as these are told of him, which may or may not be true. But the one fact about him upon which all seem agreed, and for which he is principally known, is that he believed and set forth that the origin of all things, the first principle of the universe, existed in Water.

If we try to transport ourselves in fancy into the age when Thales lived, if we try to bring before ourselves the general characteristics of his country and of his associations, we shall not find much difficulty in sympathising with, and comprehending, these his first crude attempts at philosophy.

Thirty years had elapsed between the period of the first opening of the Egyptian ports and the period of the birth of Thales. More than one generation must have passed away by the time Thales had attained the maturity of his intellect. In these fifty or sixty years we can imagine how much must have happened; how old prejudices were being slowly conquered, how new knowledge was being slowly gained. We can imagine with what displeasure the anecdotes of the nature of Egyptian knowledge (all of which knowledge tended to throw discredit upon the myths and legends of the Greek religion) were received by the old, with what reluctant consent they were acknowledged by the middle-aged, and with what avidity they were accepted by the young. We can picture to ourselves Thales, in the dawn of his manhood, surrounded and encompassed by that saddest of all Nature's sad phenomena: the slow decay and gradual death of an old religion. We can imagine him asking himself those questions which for centuries were to

perplex everyone who was not utterly frivolous or utterly bigoted: 'Whence am I? Who am I? Where am I?' We can imagine how impatiently he would turn away from those who would try and stifle his questionings with stories of the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology. How should he know whether those stories were true or untrue? Most probably they were utterly false, the inventions of trivial and prurient men. But, granting them to be true, they did not tell him what he wanted to know. What was there in the stories of Kronos, or Uranus, or Apollo to tell him who and what he himself was? He wanted to know what was the First Principle and Origin of all things. Grant the existence of the gods and goddesses. They too required an origin, an explanation. *They* had their births and marriages, their joys and woes, their crimes and virtues. Whence came *they*? If they had a real existence, their existence too required a great First Cause. The existence of the gods was as much a mystery as was the existence of man. We can imagine Thales, half in eagerness, half in sadness, setting forward on his journey to Egypt, half-fearing, half-hoping that his inquiries would be satisfied; that the faith of his fathers would be for ever banished from his mind. We can picture to ourselves his admiration and wonder at the marvellous degree of civilisation to which Egypt had attained: the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the colossal statues. But however much these artificial wonders of Egyptian greatness might kindle his astonishment and awe, there was a natural wonder greater far than these; before which, indeed, all artificial monuments sank in utter insignificance. The one, albeit it gave him almost unbounded ideas of Egyptian intellect, was yet within the bounds of ordinary comprehension—held out, indeed, some chance and hopes of imitation; but the other could by no possible means be imitated; it altogether passed the limits of human comprehension. This wonder which struck Thales with so much awe, which was the origin of all his future

philosophy, was the sight of the river Nile and its periodical inundations.

The general characteristics of the wonderful Nile Valley are so generally known, that it is hardly necessary to dwell much at length on them. From the rocky outposts of Nubia to the rich level of the Delta the river preserves much the same breadth of half a mile to three-quarters, except where its course is interrupted by islands or contracted by rocks. On either hand is a green stripe of verdure, of which the average breadth is about seven miles, extending to the limit of the waters. On each side it is bounded by a range of mountains; and beyond is the wonderful desert. Where the Nile breaks through the gate at Essouan it is observed that its waters begin to rise about the end of the month of May, and in eight or nine weeks the inundation is at its height. This flood in the river is due to the great rains which have fallen in the mountainous regions amongst which the Nile takes its rise, and which have been precipitated from the trade-winds that blow (except where disturbed by the monsoons) over the vast expanse of the tropical Indian Ocean. Thus dried, the east wind pursues its solemn course over the solitudes of Central Africa, a cloudless and rainless wind, its track marked by desolation and deserts. At first the river becomes red and then green, because the flood of its great Abyssinian branch arrives first; but soon after that of the White Nile makes its appearance, and from the overflowing banks, not only water, but a rich fertilising mud is discharged. The river attains its greatest height about the middle of September. Its waters are retained as the inundation subsides, in numerous canals, for the highest rise of the Nile ever known would not be sufficient for purposes of irrigation if the waters were not then artificially retained. When the entire surface of the river has attained its maximum very singular is the appearance of the whole country. No stranger visiting this country at this period, and for the first

time, could fail to be struck by the extraordinary appearance it presents. On the high raised bank he would stand as it were between two seas, beholding, on the one side, the swollen turbid flood hurrying down rapidly in its irresistible might, and on the other, the inundated expanse extending to the desert boundary of the valley. The isolated villages in their groves are scattered about like floating islands, the palm-trees half-buried, and, except in a few places, the *gyse* or dyke affords the sole circuitous communication from one place to another.

We can imagine how powerfully affected a seeker after knowledge, such as Thales, would be at the first sight of this strange mysterious river, with its wonderful inundations. The Egyptians themselves, accustomed as they were to the sight, could seldom bring themselves to regard it with other than a religious awe. By the lower classes, indeed, it actually became deified, and naturally so, for was it not to this same river that the country owed its fertility? Man, indeed, might dig and sow and toil, but he would reap nothing unless the beneficent river would pour forth its abundant waters. Nay, it was not merely physical necessities it so bounteously provided. It would seem that the greater portion of Egyptian knowledge could be traced to the impression this river created on the minds of the first observers. At an early period the Egyptians had observed that the rising of the Nile coincided with the rising of Sirius, the Dog Star. They erroneously, but very naturally, attributed the rising of the waters to the influence exerted on them by Sirius. It was erroneous, owing to the enormous distance that existed between the Dog Star and our earth; but how natural it was may be gathered from the fact that we always attribute, and with justice, the tides of the sea to the movements and position of the sun and moon. In the particular case of the rising of Sirius taking place exactly at the time of the rising of the Nile men mistook that to be a cause which was in reality only a coincidence.

But the very error into which they had fallen made them cultivate that science which of all sciences is the most sublime: the science of astronomy. Between the Nile-idolatry of the lower classes, and the pure Pantheism of the highest, existed a middle class, so to speak—those who worshipped the stars. It was not the Nile to whom men owed their gratitude. She did not rise of herself. It was Sirius, who forced her to rise, to whom men should pay their grateful thanks and adoration. This was the origin of astrology and star-worship. Indeed, there are some authorities who think that neither Pantheism nor rude idolatry could number nearly so many devotees as star-worship. Yet it would be hardly too much to say that the Egyptian idolatry, star-worship, even Pantheism itself, all primarily owed their origin to this same wonderful Nile. Numerous legends, half-idolatrous, half-poetical, testified to the overpowering interest with which the Egyptians regarded their river. Isis, the celebrated deity of the Egyptians, presided over the inundations. The word 'Isis,' according to some signified 'ancient,' and on that account the inscriptions of the statues of the goddess were often in these words: 'I am all that has been, that shall be, and none among mortals has hitherto taken off my veil.' Some said that Isis was supposed to be the moon, and Osiris the sun, and that the yearly and regular inundation of the Nile proceeded from the abundant tears which Isis shed for the loss of Osiris, who had been basely murdered by Typhon, the evil deity of the Egyptians, and who is generally represented under the form of a crocodile. Whether these legends were really believed in by the Egyptians, or whether they were only poetical expressions of rare beauty sung in the honour of one of Nature's chiefest wonders, for our purposes it matters little. In whatever way we regard the legends, it becomes equally apparent that the wonders and glory of the Nile pervaded the thought and language of every Egyptian.

We can imagine Thales comparing the Greek idolatry

with the idolatry of the lower classes in Egypt. He does not seem to have come in contact with those who were star-worshippers, and he does not seem to have heard of the impression current among the more educated, that the rising of the Nile was in reality due to the influence exerted by the Dog Star. He may have compared the Egyptian personifications of natural objects with the personifications by the Greeks. He may have thought them all equally trivial, and all equally in the land of fable. But one thing was true beyond all doubt—the river Nile did actually exist; did actually overflow; it was no invention, no mere dream and imagination due to the heated fancy of some one who had never visited the country. He had been there himself; had seen the flood with his own eyes; had conversed with Egyptians who had told him how regular was the periodical recurrence of the phenomenon, and how the glory and beauty of the country were entirely owing to this phenomenon. If the periodical recurrence were to fail even for once the glory of Egypt would depart. The arable land would be dried up; plants and vegetation, animals and men would cease to live. We can imagine Thales returning to his native country filled with this newly-acquired knowledge.

Yet could he say that he had gained any information as to the First Principle and Cause of all things? What was the river Nile to him now that he was back in his own native country? It might, indeed, be the first principle and cause of *Egypt*, but what had it to do with *Greece*? After all, was not Greece nearly as well off as Egypt? Egypt, it is true, had a swelling, overflowing river, but it had little rain; the floods of Egypt were fully compensated, at all events nearly compensated, by the abundant rains of Greece. The only advantage Egypt had over Greece in this wise was that the floods were regular, and the rains seemed irregular. So that in a measure the Egyptians appeared to be capable of a power of prognostication unknown to the Greeks. If the milometer which measures the height of the flood in-

cated eight cubits the Egyptians knew the crops would be scanty; but if it reached fourteen cubits there would be an abundant harvest. In the spring of the year it could be known how the fields would be in the autumn. Thus far, indeed, the Egyptians had an advantage over the Greeks; but the advantage was merely material—it might teach them prudence and the art of husbanding their goods, when they knew that the arrival of a bad season was inevitable. But that was all. In other countries the rains performed the same duty as the floods performed in Egypt. Vegetation would cease to exist in Egypt if the Nile refused to overflow; vegetation would equally cease to exist in Greece if the rains refused to descend. Where was the sense of the Egyptians worshipping their river, of rejoicing in it, of paying it such unfeigned admiration? He, too, Thales, had been lost in astonishment and awe when he had first witnessed it; but now that he had returned to his native country, we can imagine him thinking to himself that his enthusiasm had been somewhat misplaced. After all, what was it that the Nile so plenteously poured forth upon its valley? Only water; and did not the valleys of Greece receive nearly as much water from the rain that descended from the heavens? In both cases water was required, and water came. That was all.

Yes, that was all. But was it not this same phenomenon that might prove the solution of all Thales' doubts? Was there not at least something startling that in both countries water was required; in both countries water came? That if it did not come in one way it came in another? Did he not know that if rain ceased to fall in Greece he would die as quickly as the Egyptian would die if the Nile ceased to overflow? Did he not feel that, like as his death would be certain if the rain fell not, so if there had never been rain he could not have been born? The Egyptians, then, were wrong in thinking it was the Nile alone to be worshipped. It was not the river, but the water—not alone in the river, but everywhere—that should

be worshipped. Where could he look and not find water? He looked up to the heavens, and he found that it was thence the rains descended. He looked down upon the earth, and he saw huge rivers, and seas, and oceans. There were also the night and morning dews. He looked into himself, and saw that directly and indirectly man depended upon water. Whence came the fevers that oppress and torture men? Came they not because the moisture was dried up; and thus a burning, feverish desire for water was created? If that desire were not gratified, man would quickly die. Here at last, then, Thales had found the solution of his doubts. Man was not the first principle, for he depended upon the previous existence of water. The gods and goddesses were not the first principles; for grant the fact of their reality, they required water as much as mere mortals; nay, they were supposed to dwell among the skies; and was it not from the skies that the rain came down? Yes, in heaven and earth, look where he would, he found that everything owed its existence to water. Without water all things would cease to live. Without water not anything could have commenced to be. Water, then, he decided, was the first principle of all things.

About thirty years after the birth of Thales, viz., in or about the year 610 B.C., was born Anaximander, who is reputed by the ancients to have attributed the first principle of all things to the earth. He was a geographer and an inventor of geographical instruments. The earth, therefore, considered as the complex of sea and land, occupied naturally much of his thoughts. His philosophy, however, does not seem very well known; and it is only because he belonged to the Ionian school that he has any claim on our attention. He had very probably listened to Thales, and had heard him teach. He must have sympathised with him in many of his thoughts. He must have longed with him to know the beginning of all things. Yet the solution that had satisfied Thales could not satisfy him. How could

water be the first principle, when the earth was previously required upon which the rain could fall? At the bottom of the deepest ocean there was always to be found land. Surely, then, the earth, and not water, should be called the first principle of all things.

Such are somewhat of the reasons upon which I conceive Anaximander built his system of philosophy. Yet there are those who consider he did not, after all, mean to trace the origin of all things to the mere earth. The 'Infinite' was his watchword. An aggregate of phenomena seemed to him a worthier subject of contemplation than a vital power. A formula so comprehensive seemed to exhaust all possibilities. Nothing could lie beyond the unbounded. Yet it is possible that the name expressed thoughts too deep for utterance; that he really bowed before that which he could not measure and comprehend, while he seemed ambitious of summing it up in a few syllables.

From Anaximander we turn to Anaximenes, who ranks as the third philosopher of the Ionian school. His philosophy seems of greater interest, besides possessing the merit of being much easier of comprehension, than does the philosophy of his immediate predecessor. Anaximenes of Miletus was born about a century after the birth of Thales. He, too, made it his object in life to search for a first principle of all things. He was not satisfied with the solution of Thales; neither was he satisfied with that of Anaximander. Water, he argued, is not infinite; it is confined to different places. Some things there are that could not be preserved if water were to reach them. We ourselves, if we were to be immersed in water would quickly die. Of the two hypotheses, the hypothesis of Anaximander was the more reasonable; man can live upon the earth, he cannot live in water. Yet, after all, the earth could not be the first principle of *all* things. The earth compared with the whole universe was a very limited place. There

was the sky; the sun, the moon, there were the stars. The earth could not be the origin and cause of any of these. What, then, is there in common between the earth and sky, sun, moon, or stars? Is it not air? The very earth itself floats upon the air like a broad leaf. Who can discern the boundary of the atmosphere? Does it not reach to the very stars? Nay, is not the human soul itself merely composed of air? The whole of life consists in inhaling and exhaling it. As soon as we cease to breathe we cease to exist. Such is a short summary of the leading features in the philosophy of Anaximenes. Many authorities, however, thought that he too meant much more than at first appears. It has been thought that he intended to set forth the identity of the air with God. That just as air should be considered the soul or life-giving principle of man, so in like manner ought the infinite air to be identified with God; and we ought, therefore, to infer that not only man but the gods and goddesses have sprung from it. According to Plutarch, Anaximenes held that the air rules over all things, as the soul, being air, rules over and in man. According to Cicero, Anaximenes maintained, not that air was the material out of which God made the world, but that the air was God. Mr. Mill thinks that Anaximenes made choice of air as the universal agent, on the ground that it is perpetually in motion, without any apparent cause external to itself; so that he conceived it as exercising spontaneous force, and as the principle of life and activity in all things, men and gods inclusive.[1]

The doctrines of Anaximenes received a very important development in the hands of Diogenes of Apollonia, who asserted that all things originate from one essence, which, undergoing continual changes, becoming different at different times, turns back again to the same state. He taught that the entire world was a living being transforming and evolving itself spontaneously. He believed that the soul

[1] 'System of Logic,' vol. i. p. 422.

of man, and likewise the soul of the world, consisted entirely of air. He not only believed that air was eternal and perishable, but he believed it must be endowed with consciousness. 'It knows much, for without reason it would be impossible for all to be arranged so duly and proportionately as that all should maintain its fitting measure winter and summer, night and day, sunshine and rain. That which has knowledge is that which men call air; it is that which regulates and governs all, and hence it is the use of air to pervade all, and to dispose all, and to be in all, for there is nothing that has not part in it.' If by the air Diogenes meant God, it is obvious that his teaching was verging towards Pantheism; that in this Ionian school was planted that seed of Pantheism which was so soon to spring up into that tree of Pantheistic philosophy, for which afterwards the Greeks were so distinguished.

The fourth among the Ionian philosophers was Heraclitus, the Ephesian, who maintained that the first principle is fire. He flourished about 503 B.C. He was a man with a marked individual character, full of deep and pregnant thoughts. He has been sometimes called the crying philosopher. He looked with sorrow upon all the disorders of the world, both in physical nature, still more in man. His constitution was melancholy; in his views he almost amounted at times to what we should call pessimism in these days. He would not be a magistrate at Ephesus. 'What was the good of making laws for evil men?' he said; 'he would rather play with the children before the temple at Artemis.' The vaunting of the Greeks, their sense of superiority to the rest of the world, seems to have inspired him with pity and mourning. 'Your knowledge of many things does not give you reason or wisdom,' he said to them, at times when his vainglorious countrymen were indulging in their usual habit of boasting. He strongly opposed Polytheism and the idolatrous practices

of the age. The enthymeme of his system was, 'All is convertible into fire and fire into all.' But by the term 'fire' he most probably meant what we should call heat. He expressly tells us he does not mean flame, but something that is dry and warm. He considers the soul of man a portion of fire migrated from heaven. He accounted for the imbecility of the drunkard by his having a moist soul, and drew the inference that a warm or dry soul is always the best. It is not always very easy to understand his philosophy. Indeed, he has been given the title of 'the obscure,' because it was at times so difficult to understand his full meaning. Some, however, of his axioms are worth remembering, and are full of the deep melancholy earnestness that was his special characteristic. 'All is ordered by reason and intelligence, though all is subject to Fate.' 'Man's mind can produce no certain knowledge from its own interior resources alone.' 'Pride and insolence should be stifled more quickly than a fire.' 'All is, and is not; for though it does in truth come into being, yet it forthwith ceases to be.' 'No one has ever been twice on the same stream, for different waters are constantly flowing down. It dissipates its waters and gathers them again; it approaches and recedes, overflows and fails.' And to teach us how we ourselves are constantly changing, he says, 'On the same stream we embark, and embark not; we are, and we are not.' He insists strongly upon the transitory nature of all phenomena. Fire he believed to be the vital quickening power of the universe—the universal life by participation in which all particular things have their being, apart from which they are unsubstantial, unreal. All things are efficient and forcible only in their harmony, only in their subjection to some central principle of life. Take that away, and the things we behold are only phantoms; the phenomena of the universe exhibit only an endless flux. The coal without the fire is a man trying to exist

in himself; the coal ignited, receiving communication from another nature, there is a man's soul enkindled by communication with a higher, diviner reason. He regarded the organs of sense as being the channels through which the outer life of the world, and therewith truth, enters into the mind; and he believed that in sleep, when the organs of sense are closed, we are shut out from all communion with the surrounding universal spirit. In his view everything is animated and insouled, but in different degrees, organic objects being most completely or perfectly so.

Such, as far as I can understand it, is the philosophy of Heraclitus, full of earnestness and melancholy and high thoughts. Yet I confess I do not quite see in what or whence he draws his conclusion that fire is the first principle of all things. His philosophy appears to me less reasonable than does that of Thales or Anaximenes. Mr. Maurice, however, who seldom fails to understand earnest metaphysical inquirers, seems to think that there was far more in the philosophy of Heraclitus than would be apparent to a superficial reader. 'The fire that was in his heart and brain,' says Mr. Maurice, 'and of which all the world around had presented to him the image, no doubt emitted much smoke which confused and stifled—not, perhaps, to his displeasure—the careless gazers and passers-by. But there was something within him which neither his tears nor his smoke could at all adequately represent. The sense of a harmony existing beneath a perpetual conflict of powers, and making that very conflict the means of their preservation, pervaded his being, gave the tone to all his thoughts, and realised itself to him in all the inner forms and outward images of nature.' And again Mr. Maurice says: 'When, therefore, we are told that Heraclitus said the object of man's life is to know the name of Jupiter, we may be sure that Jupiter did not mean to *him* either air or fire; that it did mean

a reality which he could not comprehend, which he desired should comprehend him.' [1]

Such is a brief account of the four philosophers who are generally supposed to constitute the Ionian school; but before we draw this chapter to a close it is necessary to speak of one or two other philosophers, who, although they cannot properly be called disciples of the Ionian school, were yet so greatly influenced by that school—either directly or indirectly, either following in the same wake, or drawing off in direct antagonism from it—that it is fitting we should touch slightly upon them at the end of a chapter which has been devoted principally to the study of the Ionian philosophy.

We depart a little from chronological order for the sake of bringing Democritus of Abdera into immediate juxtaposition with Heraclitus of Ephesus. For just as Heraclitus has been called the crying philosopher, in like manner has Democritus been called the laughing philosopher. The old story which opposes the smiles of the one to the tears of the other is not without its significance, either as to the characters of the men, or of their philosophies. In everything Democritus and Heraclitus stood out in radical opposition one to the other. Heraclitus was mournful, stern, ascetic. He hated the Greek democracy. He would rather live upon herbs upon the mountains than among those who had banished their best citizens. Yet he was no haughty aristocrat or despiser of the people. He is said to have received the civilities of the great king with even more indifference than those of his countrymen. He was altogether a melancholy, brooding man, despising fame, loving solitude; possibly also of a weakly, delicate constitution. In all these particulars Democritus was wholly unlike Heraclitus.

Democritus of Abdera was born about 460 B.C. His early life was passed in extreme affluence. No money

[1] Maurice's 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,' vol. i. p. 97.

was spared in his education. It is said that his father was rich enough to be able to entertain the Persian king, Xerxes, who was so gratified thereby that he left several Magi and Chaldeans to complete the education of the youth. From such an intercourse he naturally gained an insight and knowledge of the great wisdom of the East. He was determined to devote himself for some time to travel; and on his father's death he divided with his brothers the estate, took as his portion the share consisting in money, leaving to them the lands, that he might be better able to gratify his wish for travelling. He passed into Egypt, Ethiopia, Persia, and India, gathering information, of course, from all these places. His physical knowledge was so great that he has obtained the partial admiration of Aristotle and the entire admiration of Bacon; and he has met with singular approval also from the physicists of our own day. He thought the origin of all things could be traced to self-existing atoms. He does not seem to have burdened himself with any of the speculations that tormented Heraclitus. He does not seem to have longed to penetrate into the Why and Wherefore of phenomena. It was wiser, he thought, to occupy himself with the How: that might, as with him it certainly did, lead to some practical result. The Why and Wherefore were beyond the province of man; why should he burden himself with so futile an endeavour?

Now, it is obvious that in a philosophy like this there cannot be found even the faintest indication of Pantheism. The doctrines of the Ionian philosophy might be called indifferently Materialistic or Pantheistic, according to the medium through which they are viewed. But it would be mere dishonest straining for our own purposes if we were to pretend there was anything of Pantheism in these self-existing atoms.[1] It might be unjust to call Democritus an atheist. Atheism is a charge which should never be made

[1] If it be thought strange that I consider the 'atoms of Democritus' more Materialistic in their intent than the 'water, air, fire, and earth of the four

against any man who does not openly confess himself to be an atheist. But at the same time his opinions seem certainly Materialistic, and it is often difficult to draw the exact line which divides Materialism from Atheism. Most probably Democritus did not know himself what his religious opinions were. Very likely he did not care to know. Let dreamers devote themselves to theory and speculation: he would occupy himself with practice and observation. There is a pregnant remark made, I believe, by Schlegel: 'Every man is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian.' Plato and Aristotle were not born in these days. Yet the characters of Heraclitus and Democritus testify, I think, to the truth of the remark. Heraclitus was strongly subjective in his tendencies, Democritus strongly objective. It is only on account of the juxtaposition between Democritus and Heraclitus that we have touched upon Democritus at all. However great and worthy of admiration he might be, it is obvious that, in a treatise purporting to be devoted to the consideration of Pantheism, the philosophy of Democritus can have very little claim upon our attention.

We pass from him to the study of a philosopher who concerns us much more nearly.

Ionians,' I cannot explain my reasons more clearly than by quoting the following passage from Lange:—

'Materialism only becomes a complete system when matter is conceived as *purely material*—that is, when its constituent particles are not a sort of *thinking matter*, but physical bodies, which are moved in obedience to merely physical principles, and, being in themselves without sensations, produce sensation and thought by particular forms of their combinations. And thorough-going Materialism seems almost necessarily to be Atomism, since it is scarcely possible to explain whatever happens out of matter clearly, and without any mixture of supersensuous qualities and forces, unless we resolve matter into small atoms and empty space for them to move in. The distinction, in fact, between the soul-atoms and the warm air of Diogenes of Apollonia, despite all their superficial similarity, is of quite fundamental importance. The latter is an absolute reason-stuff (*Vernunftstoff*); it is capable in itself of sensation, and its movements, such as they are, are due to its rationality. Demokritos's soul-atoms move, like all other atoms, according to purely mechanical principles, and produce the phenomenon of thinking beings only by a special combination mechanically brought about.' (*See* Thomas's translation of Lange's 'History of Materialism,' vol. i. p. 4.)

Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ was born B.C. 500.[1] He belongs, by birth and early education, to the Ionic school. He was born in considerable affluence; but he devoted all his means to the interests of philosophy, and in his old age was encompassed with poverty and want. He was taught at Athens; to the influence which surrounded him there, the direction of his mind and the peculiarity of his doctrines may, as some think, be clearly traced. Anaxagoras himself would probably have been loth to confess the obligation. Few men were more utterly wanting in the ordinary feelings of patriotism than he was. 'You care nothing for your country,' said some one to him reproachfully. 'Very much indeed do I care for it,' was the reply. 'My country is there,' pointing to the stars. He was absorbed in his love and study of nature. He hated party squabbles, club fellowships, the companions of an hour. He hated the bustle of Athens. He was the friend and master of Pericles, Euripides, and Socrates. Like several of his predecessors, he had visited Egypt. Among his disciples were some of the most eminent men of those times. But the Athenian populace could not understand him. They disliked him. They accused him of atheism and of impiety to the gods. In addition to this accusation, there was brought against him another; one that must not only have alarmed him, but caused him supreme astonishment. He was accused of Medism, of a disposition to betray Athens into the hands of the detested Persians. Anaxagoras was so absorbed in his own studies, paid so little attention to things political, that in all probability even the fact of such an empire existing as the Persian had wholly escaped him, or only remained with

[1] It is right to state that by some few authorities the age of Anaxagoras has been placed many years earlier, making him contemporary, indeed, with Anaximenes. I have consulted so many authorities concerning the ages of these early philosophers, scarcely one of which agrees with another, that it is very difficult to know which is most worthy of selection.

him as connected with some geographical observations. It is very possible that his devotion to the stars may have furnished those who wished to wound Pericles through the side of his teacher with a plausible plea for representing him as having Magian tastes and Magian propensities. He was thrown into prison, condemned to death, and barely escaped with his life through the influence of Pericles. He fled to Lampsacus, where he ended his days in exile—exile that to him was probably less painful than it would have been to the majority of men. His whole soul was absorbed in the study of the stars. And the stars could be seen at Lampsacus as well as at Athens.

The philosophy of Anaxagoras is of more interest to us than is that of any of the Greek philosophers we have as yet examined. Anaxagoras, too, like the four Ionians, sought for a first principle of all things. He was acquainted with the speculations of Thales and Anaximander, with those of Anaximenes and Heraclitus. But he was not satisfied with either of these four speculations. It was impossible, indeed, that they should satisfy him. It was not that he was bigoted or prejudiced against either of them. It was quite possible that water might be the first *visible* principle of all things. It was equally possible that air or fire might be. But neither air, nor fire, nor water, could of themselves act as they did. Look, for instance, at the wonderful order with which water fell. Regard the regular ebb and flow of the tides. Think how wonderfully the seas, lakes, rivers, and streams kept to their appointed places. Consider with what wisdom the rains descended. If there were much less rain, vegetation would be parched, and life would cease to exist. If there were much more, vegetation would become diseased and rotten ; and life would equally cease to exist. Mere unintelligent fluid, like water, could surely never arrange itself with such wonderful order. There must be some intelligence at work, something more than mere matter. Judge by ourselves. What is it that

makes the difference between the idiot and the ordinary man? An idiot has eyes, and hands, and feet, as have the ordinary run of men. Yet cannot he discriminate; he is scarcely able to dress himself, or even to walk. What is the cause of his being thus unable to perform the most ordinary acts of life? His animal body is strong and vigorous. He has limbs and organs in common with the rest of mankind. Why, then, should he not act as the rest of mankind can act? Is it not because he is so utterly wanting in intelligence? Where is the good or utility of hand or foot, of eye or ear, unless there be a directing intelligence within the head to guide them? The very fact of being provided with various organs and various limbs presupposes the fact of our being provided with sufficient intelligence to teach us their use. In the same way, then, is it impossible that any mere senseless matter should be capable of itself to act in a way that certainly shows intelligence? The water keeps within due bounds; the earth does not leap up into the sky. The air, it is true, is everywhere. Yet the air, in pervading every place, is obeying a law as much as the earth or water are obeying a law in confining themselves to particular places. Ah, yes! there was surely an intelligence at work; an intelligence which was guiding them. Chaos reigned; all things were at first of a heap, till Nous came in and set them in order. Intelligence was the reigning principle in Nature. It was equally the reigning principle in man. It is by our intelligence alone, by that power of reason with which we are endowed, that we are enabled to become acquainted with truth of any description. The senses are altogether untrustworthy, and can teach us nothing. Anaxagoras illustrated the truth of this by putting a drop of coloured liquid into a quantity of clear water, the eye being unable to recognise any change. The untrustworthiness of the senses seems to have taken a great hold on him. It affected him at times with a sort of melan-

choly despair. It forced him to confess that 'all things are to each man as they appear to him. Nothing can be known; nothing can be certain; sense is limited; intellect is weak; life is short.' He was a striking example of the fact, that it is the wisest men who are always the most saddened and oppressed with the consciousness of their own ignorance. For the age in which he lived, Anaxagoras was singularly well informed. He maintained that the moon has mountains and valleys like our earth; that there have been grand epochs in the history of our globe, in which it has been successively modified by fire and water. He believed that the hills of Lampsacus would one day be under the sea, should time not too soon fail.

Such is a brief account of the philosophy of Anaxagoras. It may strike some with surprise that a philosophy such as this should have made his countrymen accuse him of Atheism, more especially as no charge of the kind had been brought against either of the four Ionian philosophers. It may be, perhaps, that a resentment against a philosophy which was fast destroying all belief in the gods had been long smouldering in the minds of the Athenian populace, but was only now for the first time kindled into fire. It may be that the smothered anger of more than a century was at last breaking out; and that the offences of the four predecessors of Anaxagoras became merged with his own; that he was to suffer for the offences of them all. Anyhow, the antagonism between learning and Polytheism was every day becoming more distinct. Philosophers, on their part, were in consequence becoming afraid to prosecute their studies openly. And, as we shall show in the next chapter, the natural result was, that they were obliged to commence a system of secrecy and concealment, in order to save themselves from torture and imprisonment, very possibly even from death itself.

In the century or two that have elapsed between the events recorded at the commencement of this chapter and

those with which we have concluded, how great has been the progress, how rapid the growth, of reason and philosophy! Between the trivial, ignorant idolatry of the Greek Polytheism and the conceptions of Anaxagoras, how wide was the interval! From the minds of men who could people every natural object with a different divinity, who could endow their gods with their own personalities, with the practice of their own sins and obscenities, to the mind of one who could recognise one all-pervading Intelligence ruling alike over things and men, what an immense stride to take in little more than one short century! No wonder that the countrymen of Anaxagoras could not understand him. No wonder that they should impute to him the crime of Atheism. In the minds of the vulgar, Pantheism has ever been confused with Atheism: yet in reality they are as widely apart as black and white, or north and south; as evil and good, or religion and irreligion. Atheism depicts the universe as self-existing, as utterly without a God. Pantheism believes the universe to be pervaded with God. Atheism declares a God exists not anywhere, and in no place; Pantheism believes that He exists everywhere, and in all places.

It is true that Anaxagoras did not set forth in plain terms that he believed this Intelligence to be identical with God. As he has not done so, we have perhaps no right to call him a Pantheist. Yet if his views were not absolutely Pantheistic, they so strongly resembled Pantheism that it is somewhat difficult to draw the line of distinction that separates the two. The outcome of his philosophy may not have been an absolute Pantheism; yet the difference that was wanting to make it so was of so slight a description as scarcely to be within the range of ordinary observation. The philosophy of Anaxagoras may be said to constitute one of those subtle lines of demarcation where Theism is merging into Pantheism. A Theist may turn to the philosophy of Anaxagoras and discover that his philo-

sophy was the first Greek philosophy that showed any traces of Theism. A Pantheist may turn to his philosophy, and believe with equal honesty that here for the first time may be found any distinct traces of Pantheism.

We must draw this somewhat lengthy chapter to its close. In the philosophy of the Ionian school and its immediate successors there are two things to be principally noted. The four Ionian philosophers were the first Greeks who sought for the origin and principle of all things in nature; they were the first who believed that more was to be learned from the book of nature than from mere indolent acquiescence in the legends and myths of Greek religion. In so far as they severally believed water, earth, air, or fire to be the first principle—taking, that is to say, their philosophies in their apparent and perhaps superficial meaning—they were Materialists; their philosophy must be certainly called Materialistic, as much as the philosophy of Democritus would be termed Materialistic. If, as some have tried to think, there was a hidden and deeper meaning underneath their words; if (as was more obviously the case with the philosophy of the three later Ionians than with the philosophy of Thales) air, and fire, and earth were mere words or names used allegorically for some deep inner consciousness they could not explain, and scarcely even comprehend, then I think we must say their philosophy was the first faint indication of a high and abstract Pantheism. The four Ionians, then, must be called Materialists or Pantheists, according to the medium through which we view them.

Anaxagoras, on the contrary, can by no possible means be called a Materialist, whatever be the medium through which we view him. The whole aim of his philosophy was to declare that mere unintelligent matter cannot of itself act with the wisdom and forethought shown in every action and movement of air, or fire, or water. There must be an overruling Power to set chaos in order. He did not name

this Power 'God.' Perhaps he was afraid of doing so for fear of rousing his enemies still more against him. He called it Nous, or Intelligence. By whatever name he called it, one thing, I think, is clear. If by this 'Nous' he meant an overruling Providence sitting apart, commanding and ordering the elements to obey him, then his philosophy must surely be called Theistic. If, on the contrary, he believed this Intelligence to be a subtle pervading power, dwelling within every portion of creation, inhabiting man as much as inhabiting what is generally understood by Nature, then I think the philosophy of Anaxagoras must certainly be called Pantheistic. Just as the philosophy of the four Ionians would be indifferently called Materialistic or Pantheistic, according to the medium through which it is viewed, so would the philosophy of Anaxagoras be called indifferently Theistic or Pantheistic, according to the medium through which we view it.

CHAPTER II.

PYTHAGORAS.

FROM Anaxagoras, the least political of philosophers, we turn to Pythagoras, the most political.

The life and character of Pythagoras are so hidden in obscurity, and overlain with legends and tales of marvels, that it is somewhat difficult to gain any trustworthy acquaintance with either himself or his philosophy.

Some say he was the contemporary of Solon and Thales, others assigned him to the age of Tarquinius Superbus and Polycrates. The majority of modern historians, however, seem to think that Pythagoras was probably born at Samos, and was a contemporary or nearly a contemporary of Anaxagoras, flourishing, in all probability, shortly before that philosopher.

In point of ability we should, perhaps, decide that the philosophy of Pythagoras comes between that of the Ionian School and Anaxagoras. But there is one strong reason for making us believe Pythagoras was the successor, and not the predecessor, of Anaxagoras. Both Pythagoras and his disciples prosecuted their philosophical studies in secrecy; they founded a secret society, a sort of brotherhood or order. And the most probable reason for such secrecy is to be found in the alarm felt by philosophers at the anger and dislike gradually being evinced by the populace at their teaching, culminating, as we have seen, in the actual exile and threatened death of Anaxagoras. If we suppose that Pythagoras lived *after* the persecution

Anaxagoras we have some clue to the reason and cause of the secrecy of the Pythagorean brotherhood; but it becomes much more inexplicable if we suppose Pythagoras was the contemporary of Solon and Thales. There seems, then, to be no reason why this system of secrecy should have been carried on, when as yet philosophy had been free from persecution; receiving, indeed, for the most part a fair share of honour and praise.

It is this same system of secrecy that makes it so difficult for us to ascertain with certainty in what the real doctrines and teaching of Pythagoras consisted. Like Thales he had left nothing behind him in writing; and the mere fact of the secrecy and exclusiveness of his teaching would in itself be sufficient to account for the numerous myths and legends that sprang up after his death. What is secret and unknown is generally regarded with more or less of awe; besides which, it is always easy to invent fables, and always difficult to contradict them, when the subject of the fable was accustomed to teach in privacy, and had been long since dead. It can never be known, except through his disciples, what Pythagoras did or did not teach; and if those disciples chose to invent sayings and doings utterly apart from the real truth, it is almost impossible for us to disprove their statement. The proof of a negative is of proverbial difficulty.

Pythagoras, as far as we can glean from the various statements given of him, followed the Ionians in seeking for a first principle of all things. The conclusion he arrived at, however, was very different from theirs. In his mind neither the water or air, neither the earth or fire proved any satisfactory solution of the difficulty. What, then, was the first principle of all things? The answer he gave was, '*Numbers*.' Numbers lay at the root of all being. Numbers can never lie. Resolve a thing into its particles, and each particle is yet one.

It is said that Pythagoras was the first to call himself

by the title of 'philosopher.' When asked in what secret lay his art, he replied that he had none—he was but a lover and seeker after wisdom. Wisdom was the only source of happiness; wisdom was the only goal worthy of a man's ambition. Wisdom was that which he was seeking to attain. It seemed strange to him to find so few caring or endeavouring to seek it. He was a believer in metempsychosis, and thought that all mankind had come down from heaven to dwell upon this earth for but a very short period. How strange, then, that the only thing that had anything of heaven in it, the only thing capable of reminding men of their former condition—how strange it was that this heavenly quality called Wisdom should be so forsaken of mankind!

'All comes from One,' said Pythagoras. 'God embraces all, and actuates all, yet is but One. Take away every mode or condition, and there remains still the One Being which cannot be made either more or less than One.'

To the number 'Ten' extraordinary importance was imputed, since it contains in itself, or arises from the addition of 1, 2, 3, 4—that is, of even and odd numbers together; hence it received the name of the grand tetractys, because it so contained the first four numbers. The Pythagoreans likewise attached much importance to the triad, since it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. To unity, or one, they gave the designation of the 'even-odd,' asserting that it contained the property both of the even and the odd, as is plain from the fact that if 'one' be added to an even number it becomes odd, but if added to an odd number it becomes even. They even linked their arithmetical views to morality through the observation that numbers never lie. They held that the number one not only contained the most perfect but also the most imperfect; hence it followed that the most perfect, most beautiful, most wise are not at the beginning, but that they are in process of time evolved. They arranged the primary el-

ments of nature in a table of ten contraries, of which the odd and even are one, and light and darkness another.

All this, of course, sounds very fantastic; and it is at first sight somewhat difficult to understand whence arose the extreme admiration with which the disciples of Pythagoras were accustomed to regard their master. A little consideration, however, upon the characteristics of the age in which Pythagoras lived will materially assist us in comprehending the admiration, we might almost say the adoration, with which he was regarded by his disciples.

In the last chapter we dwelt at some length upon the change and alteration effected in Greek religion and Greek philosophy by the intercourse between Egypt and Greece; we showed how the more educated were in consequence gradually losing all faith in the ancient religion, and how the outcome of this gradual disbelief was the first crude commencement of philosophy. Men were fast reaching that despairing stage of unbelief when they feel that they have no positive criterion of truth; when they long to believe, but from the multiplicity of creeds and philosophies know not in what or in whom to believe. There is no state for a thoughtful mind to be in more utterly wretched than this.

If Thales had been the only philosopher he would have been worshipped most probably as eagerly as Pythagoras was worshipped; but almost as soon as his philosophy was accepted and thoroughly mastered, Anaximander arose with a new philosophy, and proved to them how wholly incorrect was the philosophy of Thales. In like manner arose Anaximenes with a new theory to supersede that of Anaximander; and Anaximenes in his turn was shortly to be superseded by Heraclitus. In this war of philosophies and creeds what was to be believed, what was to be disbelieved? Only those who have gone through it know the real misery experienced by such as are longing to believe, yet can find no certain creed worthy of belief;

who yearn for the discovery of some criterion of truth, yet the more earnestly they seek for such criterion, the more helplessly and deeper do they seem to be plunged into the mire of terrible uncertainty. Shakspere has said, 'If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.' Yet the more thoughtful of us will readily admit that it is not always advisable to change a chapel into a church, and it would be difficult to see how the world could go on if every poor man's cottage were turned into a prince's palace. The difficulty with the more thoughtful of us is not the difficulty of making up our minds to perform actions we know to be right; the far greater difficulty is to discern what really is the right: what we should believe, what we should disbelieve; what acts we should perform, what leave unperformed. This is the state many of us are in at the present day. This is the state into which many of the contemporaries of Pythagoras had been thrown.

In such a state as this men are apt to incur false accusations and unjust charges. Atheism and irreligion are imputed to them; and amongst those most open to such charges are very often the holiest and most conscientious of mankind. It is a mistake to think religious doubts and difficulties argue a want of religion. The really irreligious are those who care too little about religion to investigate it or see whether it be true or false. We never care to perplex ourselves with subjects and questions about which we feel the most utter indifference. It is a mistake to think men are less religious now than they were two or three centuries ago. If they only knew what religion to accept they would give their lives in defence of that religion as eagerly as did the martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is not the want of religious feeling that makes men appear callous and indifferent; it is the want of any adequate object upon which to expend their

religious feeling. It is the utter bewilderment that besets them when they try to examine the principles of every belief; the conflict that seems to be on the increase between religion and science; the perplexity arising from the antagonistic tenets held by sects even acknowledging the same founder—these are the religious difficulties which drive men into the terrible state of uncertainty. And the multiplicity of philosophical systems are nearly as perplexing. There is the same bewilderment in trying to compare deductive philosophy with inductive, and materialistic philosophy with metaphysical. But philosophy is more generous than religion, and refuses to condemn with virulence those who are intellectually unable to follow or agree with her.

Whether, however, the uncertainty be religious or philosophical, such of us as have gone through it will readily understand and sympathise with the intellectual, perhaps, indeed, even the moral despair that comes over men or nations when they feel that they have lost all knowledge of a criterion of truth; when they are compelled to own with Anaxagoras: 'Nothing can be known; nothing can be certain; everything is to each man as it appears to him.'

This is the state into which many of the nineteenth century philosophers have fallen; this, as we said before, is the state into which many of the contemporaries of Pythagoras had fallen.

There was Thales declaring that the first principle of all things was water; there was Anaximander declaring the first principle to be the earth; there was Anaximenes declaring it to be the air; there was Diogenes of Apollonia agreeing, and at the same time extending the views held by Anaximenes. Then came Heraclitus with his principle of fire; then, last of all and most reasonable of all, came Anaxagoras with his tenet of Intelligence or Nous: a far more satisfactory solution, as the very indignation aroused by it witnessed, than the hypothesis of either of the four

Ionian philosophers. Then, in addition to all these philosophical systems, there was the populace crying out that all philosophy was wrong; that men should occupy themselves with the gods and goddesses, should content themselves with the oracles sent down from heaven, and not attempt to meddle with subjects which were utterly beyond the comprehension of man, and which, in addition, were fast threatening to overthrow all belief and all religion.

Then at last arose Pythagoras with his system, couching his discovery in phraseology that was at once half-flattering, half-mystic: 'Not unto all shall all be known.' We can imagine with what eagerness the countrymen of Pythagoras listened to him as he divulged his discovery. We must also imagine with what words Pythagoras couched that discovery, for there are only a few disconnected sentences here and there that have come down to us.

'It is not fire, O Athenians, that is the first principle of all things; neither is it the air, nor the earth, nor water. The very easiness with which one Ionian philosopher demolishes the system of another proves the inadequacy of each. Neither is it the Nous of Anaxagoras that wholly suffices to solve the difficulty. Intelligence may predominate; it does not reign supreme. For days and weeks and months, possibly sometimes for years, the waters keep intelligently within their appointed places; the tides ebb and flow with order and regularity. The seasons succeed each other in proper arrangement. Rain and sunshine come in due proportion, giving rise to the abundant harvest which is to make glad the heart of man. All this argues an Intelligence. Thus far the philosophy of Anaxagoras is its own best pleader.

'But in the lives of most men there comes a time when Intelligence seems suddenly at bay, when the forces of Nature appear to rebel against their mistress, throw off her sway, and ruthlessly scatter the fruits of her beneficent guidance to the winds. Now is the time when desolating

whirlwinds arise, destroying impartially man and beast, trees, and plants, houses and everything that come within their reach. Now is the time when the beautiful bright sea seems to swell to a gigantic size, when the azure rippling wavelets appear changed into huge black monsters, raging with ungovernable fury against each other and against themselves, combining and at the same time outvying each other in their endeavour to destroy everything on sea and nearly everything on land. Yea, even the rains and sunshine appear in league with the tempestuous storms and hurricanes. Rains either descend in such torrents that villages, already inundated by the seas, appear like floating islands, and the sun hides his face, refusing to enliven the gloom and darkness with one ray of warmth and light; or, even worse, the sun shines out with cruel intensity, assisting the whirlwinds in their work of destruction, and the rains refuse to descend; and the earth becomes burnt, and dried, and parched, gasping for water, and no water comes. Nothing that is desirable appears; everything undesirable arrives.

'Where is poor little Intelligence now? Utterly routed and put to shame, paralysed and unable so much as to move in her own defence. The air and waters are not alone in treating her irreverently. The earth likewise fights against her yoke, and upheaves and yawns and opens, swallowing and destroying the smiling pasture lands, or cities and the civilisation of centuries, with as much indifference as it destroys the bleak moor or barren forest.

'With all this before our eyes have we any right to say that Intelligence even predominates? For days and months and even years the powers of nature and the will of man seem equally subject to her control; but what advantage is that, when in less than a month the elements, and in a lesser degree the united will of mankind, can destroy the works of wisdom and labours of civilisation it

has taken Intelligence twenty years to direct and complete? It would almost seem that the elements allowed Intelligence to prosecute her sway with a sort of contemptuous acquiescence, knowing with what easiness they could overthrow it.

'Nay, but, O Athenians, what right have we to pronounce or to decide upon what is intelligence or what is not? What know we? Anaxagoras may have erred, most probably he did err, in pronouncing Intelligence to be the first root and principle of all things. But there was one discovery he made that is undoubtedly true, that is not capable of reasonable contradiction. That discovery he couched in these words: "Nothing can be known, nothing can be certain; sense is limited; things are to each man according as they seem to him; intellect is weak, and life is short."

'Is this, then, to be the fruit and sum of all philosophy? Is this to be the be-all and end-all of our cravings and yearnings after knowledge? Are we to strive and seek and endeavour merely to be taught at last the dreary lesson of our utter inability to attain anything for which we have been seeking and striving?

'Ah me! my countrymen, if such be the end and goal of all philosophy, let us neglect the study of it; let us leave it to die a natural death or sink in inanition. Better to eat and drink and indulge in bestial lusts than to waste the whole of life in striving to attain knowledge when the only knowledge possible for us to attain is the knowledge that we can never gain any. If such be the only fruit of our study let us enjoy the hour while we may. We resemble the brutes in the manner of our birth; let us resemble them also in the manner of their life and of their death. Let us eat and drink and enjoy ourselves. Why should we waste our youth and prime in seeking to attain knowledge when every such seeker who has reached the period of old age pronounces the attainment of any knowledge to be utterly

beyond our reach? If such be the end of all philosophy, let us away with it; let us join the populace in decrying it. It is but a blind leader of the blind, or even worse, a wilful deceiver and treacherous teacher, tempting us to spend the best years of our life in trying to grasp what is without form, enticing us to erect a mere phantom and shadow of our imagination into a substance of tangible reality. Let us away with it, and crush it, and forcibly prevent it from tempting other victims to its worship.

'But, praised be the One Being and Primal Cause of all things, such is *not* the be-all and end-all of philosophy. Anaxagoras was right in telling us our senses deceive us. They do deceive. The slightest observation tells us we can only know things as they appear to us, and it is seldom the same object presents the same appearance to two persons. Fresh philosophies, new theories, are being constantly mooted only to be superseded as soon as they are mastered. And yet there *is* a criterion of truth, which did not discover itself to Anaxagoras, but which, if once perceived, is found to be utterly incontrovertible. This criterion consists of Numbers. No test can be more trustworthy, more certain, more utterly beyond the reach of argument than this. You may argue Thales out of his principle of water; you may argue Anaximenes out of his principle of air; you may even show Anaxagoras how untenable is his principle of intelligence. *But you will never be able to make me clearly believe, any more than I have the power to make any of you clearly believe, that two and two make anything less or more than four.*'

In some such words spake Pythagoras, and was listened to with an eagerness and avidity which we shall not be able to comprehend unless we recall the utter state of bewilderment and confusion so many of his listeners were then in; the uncertainty that was besetting them, and the craving for some criterion of truth that was

'making itself felt, however slight and inadequate that criterion may be.

'You will never be able to prove by argument that two and two can be either less or more than four.' 'You will never be able to show that two sides of a triangle taken together are not greater than the third.' Not very lofty criterions of truth perhaps these; yet by the starving man the hardest and driest crust is greedily welcomed; and to him who has been wearied and disappointed with false philosophies, false religions, false systems, an ounce of truth more than overbalances a pound of falsehood.

The age in which Pythagoras lived had greatly to do with the secret of his success. In a time of dreary scepticism he had hit upon a criterion of truth that was absolutely infallible; a criterion that should be acknowledged equally infallible by those living two thousand years afterwards as by those living in his own time; perhaps, indeed, even more infallible. The greater portion of any of our scientific discoveries, and the entire portion of our astronomical discoveries, may be said to have for their basis the complete reliance we place upon the infallibility of numbers. By such means we predict the return of comets and the transit of planets; and if our predictions prove untrue we know at once that the inaccuracy lies in our mode of reckoning, and not in the numbers themselves. For *numbers cannot lie.* They must be true; and the first man who ever propounded their absolute infallibility is generally supposed to be Pythagoras.

'Living (says Mr. Grote) at a time when the stock of experience was scanty, the license of hypothesis unbounded, and the process of deduction without rule or verifying test, he was thus fortunate enough to strike into that track of geometry and arithmetic in which, from data of experience few, simple, and obvious, an immense field of deduction and verifiable investigation may be travelled over.'

No wonder, then, that Pythagoras was regarded by his disciples with a sort of religious awe; no wonder that after his death he was endowed by the excitable Greeks with the qualities of a god. They were but exaggerating and transferring the infallibility of his discovery into infallibility of himself; and truly they might have worshipped a worse man. Even by his enemies, even by those who denounce him as a quack, and thaumaturgist, and impostor, he is acknowledged to have lived a singularly pure and blameless life, to have been warm and true in his friendships, and strongly endowed with religious feelings.

Whether his system of secrecy were caused by a fear of persecution, or whether he really believed that doctrines, the knowledge of which would prove beneficial to the few, might be injurious to the many, we have no certain means of judging. But at all events there seems to be no doubt that a secret society was formed, and that into this society no one was admitted unless he had previously passed through a severe process of initiation. For five years the novice was condemned to silence; various humiliations had to be borne and hardships endured. By such means Pythagoras was enabled to discern who were, or who were not, worthy to be his disciples. Those who entered upon the novitiate from mere feelings of curiosity or a love of notoriety soon returned back to their old haunts. None but those who were enthusiastic, and earnestly sincere in their application for admission into the brotherhood, would be capable of enduring a five years' period of silence, humiliation, and hardship. Mere love of notoriety or curiosity would afford no adequate motive for entering upon such a task. So that in reality this process of initiation was a system enabling Pythagoras to separate the chaff from the wheat, teaching him what to weed out and root up, what to water and nourish and uphold.

From what we can gather he seems to have appeared at first in the character of a teacher of youth; and, as was

not uncommon in those times, quickly rose from the teacher to the legislator. He lent himself to the consolidation of aristocracies, and was equally inimical to democracy and tyranny. But he was wholly devoid of personal and selfish ambition. If he wished to gain power at all he desired it for the sake of his society, and not for himself. The Pythagorean Brotherhood has been compared with a good deal of justice to the mighty Order founded by Loyola in times comparatively recent.[1] Religion made the basis of the fraternity, but religion connected with human ends of advancement and power. His disciples were selected for the most part from the noblest families, and were professedly reared to know themselves, that so they might be fitted to command the world.

In his personal character Pythagoras appears to have been singularly pure. He differed from his countrymen in his estimation of women; the majority of Greeks for the most part in those licentious times regarding woman only as a toy and plaything, even the more thoughtful of them regarding her as chiefly useful for breeding purposes, and totally incapable of taking any part in the councils and graver studies of men. But Pythagoras lectured and imparted knowledge to women with as much eagerness and earnestness as he did to men. His wife was herself a philosopher. It is said that his wife and daughter used always to walk at the head of his religious processions, and that among the most prominent ornaments of his school were fifteen of the softer sex.

That Pythagoras was somewhat of a mystic must be admitted. It was almost inevitable that he should be so. With his belief in numbers and his strong disbelief in the trustworthiness of the senses, he could scarcely have prevented his language from becoming figurative, and to the vulgar mind somewhat incomprehensible. It is said that he believed that numbers lay at the root of all being, or

[1] Bulwer Lytton.

rather that they were the cause of all phenomenal being. It is said that he believed the very existence of the world to be an illusion, and therefore could not have any origin in time, but only seemingly so to human thought. Numerical existence he proclaimed to be the only invariable existence. Therefore the Infinite, or existence in itself, must be One. One is the absolute Number; it exists in and by itself. All modes of existence are but finite aspects of the Infinite; and in the same way numbers are but numerical relations of the One. The number 'Two' is but the relation of One to One. In the original One all numbers are contained, and therefore the elements of the whole world. It is said that he believed everything, the whole phenomena of the universe, to be but copies of Numbers. In fact, just as the four Ionians are said to have severally proclaimed water, air, fire, and earth to be the first principle or beginning of all things, so is Pythagoras stated to have proclaimed the number One to be the beginning of all things.

But after all we must be careful not to confuse the opinions of Pythagoras with the opinions of his disciples, or with the opinions of the later Pythagorean brotherhood. A philosophy, or indeed a cause or system of any description, is apt to suffer as much from the exaggerations of ardent and zealous partisans as from the contempt of disbelievers or abuse of enemies. And the system of Pythagoras was more than usually open to such abuse, partly, as we have said, through the fact of his leaving no writings behind him, partly because he really does not seem to have cared to explain himself in language that would be comprehensible by the uninitiated. He seems to have always spoken in a language more or less figurative, and his disciples were in consequence apt to confuse the figure and the reality one with the other. Numbers soon ceased to be symbols with them, and were exaggerated into things. It is even said that after the death of Pythagoras so entirely

did numbers become regarded as things that they actually became deified and worshipped. But we must not charge him with the offences of his disciples; as justly might we charge him with being an impostor and aspirer to divinity because some of his more enthusiastic admirers declared him to be either the son of Hermes or else of Apollo.

After all, the chief matter to be noted concerning him, in a treatise purporting to be devoted to the history of Pantheism, is that the philosophy of Pythagoras is evidently a development of the philosophy of the Ionians, and is also a foreshadowing of the Eleatic philosophy, of which we shall treat in the next chapter.

It is interesting and advantageous for us to be able thus to trace the history of Greek Pantheism from its faintest germs and first indications, more especially as we were prevented from thus tracing the history of Oriental Pantheism, owing to the great antiquity of the Hindoo nation.

We have no right, perhaps, to call the philosophy of Pythagoras Pantheistic any more than we have any right to call the philosophy of the Ionians Pantheistic; yet they were both of them legitimate forerunners of the Eleatics, who were acknowledged to be purely and entirely Pantheistic in the manner of their doctrines.

The Ionians were the first to discard a belief in a number of divinities and first principles, all warring with and against one another; they were the first to see that there could be but One First Principle of all things, and they sought for that in water, air, fire, or earth as the case might be. The philosophy of Pythagoras, however, was an immense development upon that of the Ionians. Pythagoras did not merely believe that there must be One First Principle of all things, but he believed that this One must contain in itself and comprehend all things. Such a doctrine is surely verging on Pantheism. If he had endowed this One with the name of God it would have certainly

been actual Pantheism. The majority of competent authorities (among whom is notably Mr. Lewes [1]) seem, however, against the notion that Pythagoras was a theist of any description, either monotheist or pantheist; and as unfortunately we have little or nothing recorded of Pythagoras first-hand, we are consequently forced to be content with second-hand knowledge concerning him; and in cases where second-hand knowledge is thus obligatory, it is, for the most part, wisest to consult and accept such authorities as have proved themselves reliable in other matters. Otherwise, were it not for the weighty authorities against me, I should be inclined to side with those who consider Pythagoras did really teach the doctrine of a Soul of the World; that he intended in reality, by his First Principle of the One, something far deeper, far more inexpressible, than the mere number One taken by itself. However that may be, whether by his doctrine of the *One* Pythagoras meant God Himself or only the mere number One, one thing is to be remarked: that whereas the Ionians were contented with finding a First Principle, Pythagoras went further, and after having discovered and decided upon what should be considered the First Principle, he believed this First Principle must contain and comprehend within itself the whole phenomena of the entire universe.

Before leaving this part of our subject we will append Mr. Lewes' translation of Aristotle's comments upon the philosophy of Pythagoras and his disciples, premising, however, that by many Aristotle is deemed to have consciously or unconsciously misrepresented the doctrines of this philosopher:—

'In the age of these philosophers (the Eleats and Atomists), and even before them, lived those called Pythagoreans, who at first applied themselves to mathematics, a science they improved; and, having been trained exclusively

[1] Lewes' 'History of Philosophy,' vol. i. p. 34.

in it, they fancied that the principles of mathematics were the principles of all things.

'Since Numbers are by nature *prior* to all things, in Numbers they thought they perceived greater analogies with that which exists, and that which is produced, than in fire, earth, or water. So that a certain combination of Numbers was justice, and a certain other combination of Numbers was reason and intelligence, and a certain other combination of Numbers was opportunity, and so of the rest.

'Moreover in Numbers they saw the combinations of harmony. Since, therefore, all things seemed formed similarly to Numbers, and Numbers being by nature anterior to things, they concluded that the elements of Numbers are the elements of things, and that the whole heaven is a harmony and a Number. Having indicated the great analogies between Numbers and the phenomena of heaven and its parts, and with the phenomena of the whole world, they formed a system, and if any gap was apparent in the system, they used every effort to restore the connection. Thus, since ten appeared to them a perfect number, potentially containing all numbers, they declared that the moving celestial bodies were ten in number, but because only nine were visible they imagined a tenth, the *Antichthone*.

'We have treated of all these things more in detail elsewhere. But the reason why we recur to them is this, that we may learn from these philosophers also what they lay down as their first principles, and by what process they hit upon the causes aforesaid.

'They maintained that Number was the beginning (principle, ἀρχή) of things, the cause of their material existence, and of their modifications and different states. The elements of Number are odd and even. The odd is finite, the even infinite. Unity, the one, partakes of both these, and is both odd and even. All number is derived from the one. The heavens, as we said before, are com-

posed of Numbers. Other Pythagoreans say there are ten Principia—those called co-ordinates:—

The finite and the infinite.
The odd and the even.
The one and the many.
The right and the left.
The male and the female.
The quiescent and the moving.
The right line and the curved.
Light and darkness.
Good and evil.
The square and the oblong.

'All the Pythagoreans considered the elements as material, for the elements are in all things and constitute the world.

'The finite, the infinite, and the one they maintained to be not separate existences, such as are fire, water, &c., but the abstract infinite and the abstract one are respectively the substance of the things of which they are predicated, and hence, too, Number is the substance of all things. They began by attending only to the *form* and began to define it, but on this subject they were very imperfect. They define superficially, and that which suited their definition they declared to be the essence of the thing defined, as if one should maintain that the double and the number two are the same thing, because the double is first found in the two. But two and the double are not equal (in essence), or if so, then one would be many, a consequence which follows from their (the Pythagorean) doctrine. . . . . .

'The Pythagoreans employ the Principia and Elements more strangely than even the physiologists, the cause of which is that they do not take them from sensible things. However, all their researches are physical, all their systems are physical. They explain the productions of heaven, and observe that which takes place in its various parts and its revolutions, and thus they employ their Principles and Causes, as if they agreed with the physiologists that what-

ever *is* is *material*, and is that which contains what we call heaven.

'But their Causes and Principles we should pronounce sufficient to raise them up to the conception of intelligible things, of things above sense, and would accord with such a conception much better than with that of physical things.'[1]

According to Bishop Thirlwall the leading thought of Pythagoras appears to have been 'that the state and the individual ought, each in its way, to reflect the image of that order and harmony by which he believed the universe to be sustained and regulated; and he only expressed the religious side of this thought, when he said, that the highest end of human existence was to follow or resemble the Deity. But he was aware that this sublime idea can never be fully embodied in this sublunary world, and that a wise man will be content with slowly approaching the unattainable mark, and in working upon others will adapt his exertions to the circumstances in which he is placed, and to the imperfection of those whom he has to deal with. He had before him the example of Lycurgus, and, still nearer, those of Zaleucus and Charondas, who had legislated, not many generations earlier, the one for Locri and the other for Catana, on principles so agreeable to his own, that in the traditions of later times they were numbered among his disciples. This, however, was probably something more than the state of affairs which he found at Croton would have permitted him to undertake, and yet less than he might hope to accomplish by different means. He did not frame a constitution or code of laws, nor does he appear ever to have assumed any public office. He instituted a society—an order we might now call it—of which he became the general. It was composed of young men, carefully selected from the noblest families, not only of Croton but of other Italiot cities; their number amounted

[1] 'History of Philosophy, pp. 36–38.

or was confined, to three hundred; and if he expected by their co-operation to exercise a sway, firmer and more lasting than that of a lawgiver or a magistrate, first over Croton, and in the end over all the Italian colonies, his project, though new and bold, ought not to be pronounced visionary or extravagant.

'According to our view of this celebrated society, it is not surprising that it should have presented such a variety of aspects, as to mislead those who fixed their attention on any one of them, and withdrew it from the rest. It was at once a philosophical school, a religious brotherhood, and a political association; and all these characters appear to have been inseparably united in the founder's mind. It must be considered as a proof of upright intentions in Pythagoras, which ought to rescue him from all suspicion of selfish motives, that he chose for his coadjutors persons whom he deemed capable of grasping the highest truths which he could communicate, and was not only willing to teach them all he knew, but regarded the utmost cultivation of their intellectual faculties as a necessary preparation for the work to which he destined them. His lessons were certainly not confined to particular branches of mathematical or physical science, but were clearly meant to throw the fullest light on the greatest questions which can occupy the human mind. Those who were to govern others were first to contemplate the world, and to comprehend the place which they filled in it. The Pythagorean philosophy may indeed appear singularly foreign to the business of a statesman; but we know that some of the greatest, both in ancient and modern times, have been nourished in such speculations, and the effects of the exercise are not to be measured by the importance of the scientific results.

'It is certain that religion was intimately connected with the institutions of Pythagoras, and it may not be too much to say that it was the centre in which they rested, or

'the corner-stone of the whole fabric, and the main bond of union among his followers. But it is by no means clear, either what kind of religion it was, or in what manner it acted. And its importance may have been the cause of this obscurity; for it is highly probable that the secrecy in which the proceedings of the fraternity were enveloped, related not to its philosophical doctrines, nor even to its political designs, but to its religious observances. In what relation, however, this mystic religion stood to that of the public temples is very doubtful. Pythagoras is said to have inveighed, as bitterly as Zenophanes, against Homer and Hesiod for degrading their divine personages, but he professed the highest reverence for the objects of the popular superstition. It is true that he reduced the gods to so many Numbers; but this was a theological nicety, and did not concern the multitude which saw him bow at their altars. There is no reason to think that these mysteries conveyed any doctrines inconsistent with the common opinions. It is most probable that the chief object of the mysteries was to inculcate the dogma of the immortality and migrations of the soul, which might be easily applied to the purpose of strengthening a generous enthusiasm. But there can be no doubt that religion was made to hallow all the relations into which the associates entered, that it cemented their mutual attachment, and exalted their veneration for their master. It is also important to observe that the mysteries appear to have been open, though not perhaps in their last stage, to persons who were not members of the political society. Thus, women seem to have been admitted to them; and hence we find a long list of female Pythagoreans. It is easy to imagine how much the influence of the institution must have been enlarged by such an accession. . . . . .

'The ambition of Pythagoras was assuredly, as we have already remarked, truly lofty and noble. He aimed at establishing a dominion which he believed to be that

of wisdom and virtue, a rational supremacy of minds enlightened by philosophy and purified by religion, and characters fitted to maintain an ascendant over others by habits of self-command. Yet the failure of his undertaking, which however must not be considered as a total one, seems to have been owing not altogether to the violence and malignity of the passions he had to contend with, but in part also to the weakness and rudeness of the instruments which he employed. He found or thought himself compelled to become a party in a contest, where the right certainly did not lie all on one side. We are informed that at first he obtained unbounded influence over all classes at Croton, and effected a general reformation in the habits of the people, and that in other Italian cities he gained such a footing as enabled him either to counteract revolutionary movements, or to restore aristocratical government where it had given way to tyranny or democracy. The senate of Croton is said to have pressed him to guide it with his counsels, which may signify that he was invited to accept the office of a chief magistrate, or even a dictatorial authority. But he seems always to have remained in a private station, and the conjecture that his three hundred formed a legal assembly, which was raised above the senate, is the more improbable because they are said to have included several citizens of other States. Yet they had gained a predominance both at Croton and elsewhere, which had perhaps excited both the hostility of the party whose interests they opposed, and the jealousy of that which they espoused, long before the event which was the immediate occasion of their ruin. We do not venture to decide what foundation there may have been for the charge which was brought against them, of attempting to abolish the popular assembly, which seems from the first to have been very narrowly limited in its powers. But the charge would not be refuted by any professions of attachment to the ancient constitution, which they may have made when innovations

'were proposed on the side of democracy, even if it related to the period preceding their final breach with the commonalty. It would seem, however, that they fell chiefly through an overweening confidence in their own strength.

'The civil dissensions of Sybaris had at length come to a head, and broke out in a general insurrection against the oligarchs, who probably drew the supplies of their proverbial luxury from encroachment, either violent or fraudulent, on the popular rights. The insurgents, headed by a leader named Telys, who was most likely a member of the ruling class, and had some private animosity to gratify, did not observe the modesty of the Roman plebeians. They not only compelled their lords, to the number of five hundred, to quit the city, but, when the exiles had taken refuge at Croton, sent an insolent message to demand that they should be surrendered. Pythagoras is said to have exerted his influence with the senate and people of Croton to induce them to reject this imperious requisition, and on this occasion he must have had the good feelings of all parties on his side. It would indeed be a strong indication of the progress of discontent at home, if on such a point he had any opposition to encounter. The summons, however, was resisted, and Croton accepted the challenge which accompanied it, and armed for war. Sybaris is said to have sent three hundred thousand men, perhaps her whole serviceable population, into the field. The forces of Croton amounted to no more than a third of this number; but they were commanded by Milo, a disciple of Pythagoras, who seems to have united the abilities of a general with the bodily strength for which he was celebrated above all his contemporaries. They were also animated by the presence of Callias, a seer sprung from the gifted lineage of Iamus, who came over to them from Sybaris with tidings that their enemies were threatened by adverse omens; and there was a tradition that they were exasperated by the cruel fate of thirty of their citizens w[illegible]

had been sent on an embassy to Sybaris, and were barbarously murdered there. The two hosts met on the banks of the Trionto, and victory declared itself for Croton. It was probably after the battle that a reaction, which if it had happened sooner must have put a stop to hostilities, took place at Sybaris, in which Telys and his principal partisans were massacred at the altars. But this sally of revenge or despair came too late to save the unfortunate city from its doom. The conquerors advanced with irresistible force, and resolved to sweep Sybaris away from the face of the earth. She was emptied of her remaining inhabitants, sacked and razed to the ground, and a river (the Crathis) was turned through the ruins to obliterate all traces of her departed greatness.

'The senate of Croton, and the Pythagorean associates, seem to have been elated with this victory, and to have fancied it was the triumph of their cause, and that they alone were to reap its fruits. When the question arose as to the distribution of the spoil, and of the conquered land, they insisted on retaining the whole in the name of the State, and refused to concede any share to those who had earned it all by their toil and blood. It may have been now that they thought they saw a favourable opportunity of silencing all opposition by suppressing the popular assembly. But if this was the case they probably miscalculated the effects of the public success, which may have raised the spirits of their domestic adversaries as high as their own. The commonalty was not awed, but only irritated by the attempt. Its fury was directed against the society, chiefly it is said by Cylon, a noble and wealthy man, who is believed to have been rejected by Pythagoras, when he sought to be admitted among his followers. A tumult took place in which the populace set fire to Milo's house, where the Pythagoreans were assembled. Many perished, and the rest only found safety in exile. It is not clear whether

Pythagoras himself was at Croton during this commotion; but the general belief seems to have been that he died not long after at Metapontum.'[1]

[1] Thirlwall's 'History of Greece,' vol. ii. pp. 147–155.

CHAPTER III.

THE ELEATICS.

WE have now reached the consideration of the Eleatic school of philosophy, which derives its name from Elea, a Greek colonial city of Italy, its chief authors being Zenophanes, Parmenides, and Zeno.

With Zenophanes, the founder of the Eleatic school of thought, philosophy appears to be passing into a new phase; although that phase had been gradually led up to by the philosophies of the Ionians and Pythagoras, who indeed may be called its legitimate forerunners and precursors, the Eleatic philosophy being almost a natural consequence of the previous philosophies.

The title of 'school' belongs more properly to the Eleatics than to the Ionians, inasmuch as the doctrines of Zenophanes were really developed and carried out by his disciples Parmenides and Zeno; whereas the Ionians, as we have seen, taught their several doctrines quite independently one of the other; and, if we except, perhaps, Anaximenes and Diogenes of Apollonia, no one of the Ionian philosophers could properly be called the disciple of the other.

Up to the time of Zenophanes, philosophical studies had been prosecuted in a more or less spirit of dogmatism. Each of the four Ionians, no less than Pythagoras, believed they had severally discovered the first principle of nature; and for the most part preached and set forth their doctrines as if they believed them to be irrevocable and final, although it is true that now and again there seems to be a faint fore-

shadowing of the scepticism that was to follow; a painful, dreary uncertainty in their belief in their own discoveries. But the uncertainty is only faintly and occasionally implied; whereas their dogmatic assurance of water, air, fire, earth, or Numbers being severally the first principle of all things is more than implied; it is very clearly shown; and they each of them spent their lives in spreading and setting forth their particular doctrines and tenets. Zenophanes was not less earnest (indeed he was far more earnest) than the Ionians in seeking to make his philosophy known; but there is an absolute absence of dogmatism, almost indeed a pronounced scepticism, running through the whole of his teaching, that we fail to find in any of the Ionians; the only philosophy we have as yet examined at all resembling him on this wise being the philosophy of Anaxagoras. The philosophy of the Eleatics differs also from that of the Ionians in being far less equivocal. We do not know what religious opinions the Ionians held. They seem in more or less degree to have believed in one Being, the sum and essence of all things. But they never named this Being 'God.' They couched the religious portion of their philosophy in such vague phraseology that, as we said in a previous chapter, it is not difficult for a materialist, a pantheist, or theist to discover his particular views reflected in these several philosophies.

But with the school of philosophy of which Zenophanes is the founder we are no longer left in perplexity as to what it did or did not believe, what it did or did not intend to teach. Zenophanes, too, was happier than the men of the Ionic school, inasmuch as he was a poet as well as a philosopher, and the fragments of his poems that have come down to us throw some little light upon his life, besides rendering us capable of learning somewhat of his own thoughts as depicted by himself.

There is nothing equivocal in his religious views. We cannot doubt that he was an earnest and consistent Theist,

but we equally cannot doubt that he was an earnest and consistent Pantheist, for with him pantheism and monotheism are synonymous and convertible terms. He denounced the conception of a plurality of gods as an inconceivable error. He proclaimed God as an all-powerful Being, existing from eternity, and without any likeness to man. He seems to have been overwhelmed with even a more than ordinary degree of painful uncertainty in endeavouring to fully comprehend this Being. But of one thing he could at least be certain: God was an all-powerful Being, and in the nature of things there could not be more than one all-powerful, or one all-perfect; for if there were even so many as two, those attributes could not apply to one of them, much less then if there were many. In the same way, since there cannot be two Eternals or two Omnipresents, the Universe must necessarily be identical with God. He taught that God and nature were thus identical, and that God, being nature, was therefore the sum of all being. He believed God to be without parts and throughout alike; for if He had parts, some would be ruled by others, which would be unintelligible, for the very idea of God presupposes his perfect and entire completeness. In his opinion there could be but one existence, and all conditions were but modes of that existence. The one Being was neither infinite nor finite. Not infinite, because non-being alone, as having neither beginning, middle, nor end is unlimited (infinite). Not finite, because one thing can only be limited by another, and God is one, not many. In like manner did logic teach him that God was neither moved nor unmoved. Not moved, because one thing can only be moved by another, and God is one, not many; not unmoved, because non-being alone is unmoved, inasmuch as it neither goes to another, nor does another come to it. In a figurative way he conceived and represented God to be a sphere encompassing man and the whole of nature. As Aristotle says of him: 'Casting his eyes upwards at the

immensity of heaven, he declared that the One is God. All nature was one Being. The universe itself was identical with God, and, being identical, was one eternal unchangeable Whole, knowing neither death nor decay nor motion. The apparent phenomena of death and decay, or of change of any description, being mere impressions made upon the mind of the subject, and seldom appearing to two minds in the same light.

All this will probably be deemed metaphysical and bewildering, but we must remember it is nevertheless perfectly true. We only know of things subjectively; what they are objectively we know not, most probably we never shall know. An object appears smaller and smaller the further we are removed from it. If movement be very rapid, we are unable to distinguish it; if it be very slow, we are equally unable to distinguish it. A disordered state of the brain, or of the stomach, will give rise to apparent noises in the ears, or spots before the eyes, which have no objective reality. And indeed the only thing we may affirm with any certainty about the senses is that no object has ever yet been represented by them to us in its true reality.

This scepticism of Zenophanes, and his disbelief in the trustworthiness of the senses was afterwards greatly developed and extended by Pyrrho. Zenophanes, even when most bewildered and despairing amidst the multiplicity and confusion of metaphysical subtleties, never doubted that there was a reality amongst and beneath all the illusions and delusions of phenomena, a reality capable of being discovered and comprehended. He was only afraid that it had not fallen to his lot to be able to find or comprehend the reality. But he believed he must be patient, and endeavour with all his might to conquer the deceptions of the senses; he might then be able to gain at least an occasional glimpse of real truth amidst so much error. The stronghold of Pyrrho was much more impr-

nable and logical, although, to my mind, utterly, drearily paralysing to all the higher and better efforts of man. He believed there was no criterion of truth. It was mere waste of time to seek for any. We can only know phenomena and appearances. And what are phenomena? What are appearances? Their very name distinguishes them from noumena and realities. What is the utility of even attempting to comprehend things as they are, when these self-same things appear to us differently at different times; and again appear differently to different individuals. Why does an orange appear to us yellow, round, fragrant, soft, and sweet, and if thrown to the floor make a different sound from an apple or a nut? Because we have five senses, each of which reveals to us a different quality in the object. If we had another sense the object would have another quality; if we had one less sense the object would have one less quality. If you say that reason must teach us to distinguish between true and false, you are assuming that reason never errs, whereas you have no proof of it being *ever* correct. Customs that are considered reasonable by one nation are considered unreasonable by another. Deeds and actions deemed criminal in one country are considered praiseworthy in another. There is no criterion of truth. Seek not then for it. The problems of life are insoluble. Live up to the general precepts of your country, and guide yourself as much as possible by the general precepts of common sense. Seek not to learn the *real* good, the real truth, the real wisdom, for when you think or believe you have found either, there is no absolute criterion to prove to you that you have done so in reality.

Such is the logical outcome of that scepticism of which Zenophanes is generally believed to be the first founder. Yet Zenophanes himself was no sceptic. He only knew that no one before him had discovered truth; he felt at times that he himself had succeeded very little better in

the attempt than his predecessors. But he never for a moment doubted that there was a truth, that there was a reality. A truth and reality that it was his duty, in so far as he knew it, to devote his life to preaching and declaring to poor and rich, learned and unlearned, alike. In this he differed from Pythagoras. He made no selection of a chosen few, he made no secret of his philosophy. If there were such a thing as truth, and if he had succeeded ever so faintly in comprehending it, it was surely his duty to acquaint everyone alike and impartially with such knowledge as he himself had managed to attain. And he did devote the whole of his life to this occupation. From city to city, from place to place, he went about preaching, trying to wean the people from a belief in polytheism, denouncing Homer because in his poems he had depicted the gods in the likeness of men, and had endowed them with human frailties and human errors :—

> Such things of the gods are related by Homer and Hesiod
> As would be shame and abiding disgrace to any of mankind;
> Promises broken, and thefts, and the one deceiving the other.

He spent his life in trying to wean his countrymen from the grossness of their anthropomorphism. Through all his doubts and difficulties he never wavered for one moment in his belief in pantheistic monotheism.

> One God, of all beings divine and human the greatest;
> Neither in body alike unto mortals, neither in spirit.

He showed them how unreasonable it was for men to create their gods in the images of themselves, for different men depicted them in different ways, and it was impossible that all should be right. The Ethiopians represented their gods with flat noses and black complexions, while the Thracians gave them blue eyes and ruddy complexions. If the very beasts could attain to a conception of God they would also depict him like unto themselves.

> But men foolishly think that gods are born like as men are,
> And have, too, a dress like their own, and their voice and their figure.

But if oxen and lions had hands like ours, and fingers,
Then would horses like unto horses, and oxen to oxen,
Paint and fashion their gods' forms, and give to them bodies
Of like shape to their own, as they themselves, too, are fashioned.[1]

With a sort of passionate earnestness he tried to wean his hearers from their debasing conceptions of God. He tried to show them that God is utterly unlike to man, unlike to any object in nature; and yet man and nature were comprehended in God. Divers portions make up one whole, although those portions may be utterly dissimilar one from the other. (What can be more apparently dissimilar than bones and blood and flesh? yet they all three serve to make up the one being, man.) So is every object, past, present, and future comprehended in the nature of God and contained in him. There was no need for the hypothesis of two eternal principles: God and matter. For God was matter; and yet he was also mind,—in a word he was the One and the All.

That Zenophanes became at times confusing and perplexing in his attempts at defining his pantheistic tenets must be admitted. Every finite mind is apt to wander in perplexity when attempting to define what is infinite and consequently indefinable. No one was more conscious of this than Zenophanes himself.

Oh, that mine were the deep mind, prudent, and looking to both sides!
Long, alas! have I strayed on the road of error beguiled,
And am now, hoary of years, yet exposed to doubt and distraction
Manifold, all-perplexing, for whithersoever I turn me
I am lost in the One and the All.

The age in which Zenophanes lived has long been considered doubtful. Some think he was a contemporary of Pythagoras; Mr. Lewes, however, seems to think he probably was born somewhere about 620–616 B.C., and lived nearly a hundred years. In this case he would have been

[1] 'In these fragments of Zenophanes' poems, as well as in the fragments of the poems of Parmenides, I have made use of Mr. Lewes's translations, as given in his "History of Philosophy."'

considerably the predecessor both of Anaxagoras and Pythagoras, and on account of his superior age must have begun his system of philosophy some years before either of those two philosophers. There is an anecdote told of Zenophanes that somewhat confirms, however, the chronology that would make him contemporary with Pythagoras. Some man was one day about to lift his stick against his dog who had offended him, when either Pythagoras, or one of his disciples, rushed up to the man, and implored him to desist, as in the cries of the dog he recognised the voice of an old friend. Zenophanes, who was supposed to be passing at that moment, is represented as mocking at, and deriding, the philosophy which could teach so unreasonable and foolish a belief as the doctrine of metempsychosis.

The deep earnestness characteristic of Zenophanes prevented him from having any selfish personal fears about angering the populace by his denunciation of polytheism. He formed no secret society as did Pythagoras. He felt that truth was for all men, and that to all men it was consequently his duty to preach. And although he was banished from Kolophon, his native place, he was never persecuted in the same way that was Anaxagoras. He wandered from place to place preaching until he came to Elea, where he finally settled. He gained little pecuniary benefit from his vocation, but he could dispense with riches. If he could have been only certain that he had found the truth he would have been contented. His soul was too much absorbed in the contemplation of grand spiritual ideas for him to care about luxuries, dainty living, or servants and rich houses. But there is something ineffably sad in the thought of this old man, after spending the whole of his long life, and all his substance, in the prosecution of philosophy, declaring, at the age of a hundred years, that error was so spread over all things that he could not tell whether, after all his labours, he had really gained any true knowledge or had not.

We now turn to the second of the Eleatics—Parmenides.

Parmenides was born at Elea somewhere about 536 B.C. He belonged to a noble, wealthy family, and, according to some authorities, spent the earlier portion of his young manhood in practices of dissipation and vice. But with a peculiarly powerful intellect, and with the additional advantage of having occasionally listened to poetical sermons or lectures delivered by the aged Zenophanes, it was only natural that habits of dissipation and frivolous pleasures would quickly pall on him, and that by the time he had passed the period of extreme youth, he would become satiated and disgusted with the occupations of a dissipated voluptuary. He forsook his gay companions and his former haunts of vice, and devoted himself partly to the study of politics, partly to the study of philosophy. The fruits of his political study were shown in a code of laws which he drew up, and which were considered so profound and salutary that the citizens at first yearly renewed their oath to abide by the laws of Parmenides. It is, however, the philosophical studies of Parmenides, and not the political, with which we are principally concerned.

With some, the philosophy of Parmenides is considered to be merely a development and extension of the philosophy of Zenophanes, but that it may lay claim to be something more than that, we think we shall be able to clearly show.

We have seen how despairingly Zenophanes turned away from the investigation of physical nature. In this despair he was undoubtedly followed by Parmenides, who, considering the phenomena of material things to be entirely delusive, set out with the determination to abandon all research after the investigation of visible nature. The Ionians had clearly shown how little could be done in that way. He would devote himself to a study far more profitable, nay, the only study worthy of a man's highest efforts,

the investigation of Being and of God. Like Zenophanes, he expressed his thoughts in verse; but as a poet he is considered not to equal his predecessor, although in point of ability, his philosophy is generally supposed to rank higher.

The first characteristic to be noted in the philosophy of Parmenides is the decided distinction he draws between truth and opinion. In the philosophy of Zenophanes we have seen some faint traces of this peculiarity. But in Parmenides those traces have grown to clear actual outlines. Zenophanes' belief in a truth was more a matter of feeling than knowledge. He *felt* there must be a truth, a reality, somewhere, but where to seek it he knew not. Experience had not taught him. His intense earnestness, his deep religious feeling, prevented him from wholly attaining absolute scepticism. But his philosophy at times shows strong indications that, in spite of himself, absolute scepticism was threatening to enfold him.

With Parmenides there was not this uncertainty. Some knowledge, it was true, was undoubtedly uncertain: to such he gave the name of opinion. But there was also a species of truth that was felt by everyone to be equally true, that could not properly come under the denomination, or within the province, of opinion, inasmuch as opinion was powerless to alter or modify it. These truths were necessary truths, and thus in a measure this doctrine of Parmenides formed a sort of anticipation of the doctrine of innate ideas. The reason of this diversity between the philosophy of Zenophanes and that of Parmenides may be traced, we think, to the different influences to which they were exposed.

Whether we believe that Zenophanes was contemporary with Pythagoras, or whether we believe he lived several years before, it appears in both cases equally evident that he was little acquainted with the more important doctrines of Pythagoras. It would have been quite possible for him to have been a contemporary, and yet for him never t

have listened to the teachings of that philosopher, through the fact of the strict system of secrecy preserved by the Pythagorean brotherhood; or it may be that Zenophanes, with his contempt and dislike to the doctrine of metempsychosis, refused to become a learner or disciple of one who could set forth such a doctrine. However that may be, we may be tolerably sure that the silence of Zenophanes concerning the more important doctrines of Pythagoras proves his ignorance of them. Take, for instance, the Pythagorean demonstration of the truth of Numbers. Such a demonstration would most probably have been seized by a seeker after truth like Zenophanes with eager avidity. But even in the case of it not satisfying him, he would then have done his best to disprove it. It was certainly at least worthy of refutation. Such a doctrine was surely too important to be passed by with silent contempt. We may, therefore, safely assume that Zenophanes, even if he were a contemporary of Pythagoras, knew little or nothing of the more important doctrines of the Pythagorean philosophy.

But with Parmenides we are not so certain. On the contrary, there seems a strong probability that he was not only acquainted with the philosophy of Pythagoras, but had partly accepted it. In the first place, he was born some fifty or sixty years later than Zenophanes, so that, chronologically speaking (as far as it is possible for us to judge from the mass of confusion surrounding us, arising from such conflicting statements of chronology), it is far more probable that Parmenides was a contemporary, or nearly so, of Pythagoras than that Zenophanes was. In the second place, there is a fairly reliable tradition assigning Diochœtes, a Pythagorean, as the teacher of Parmenides, in addition to the aged Zenophanes. And, thirdly, the philosophy of Parmenides in itself forms a sort of intrinsic evidence that that philosopher was acquainted with the doctrines of Pythagoras, inasmuch as his philosophy may

be called a sort of combination of the highest and best portions of the philosophy of Zenophanes with the highest and best portions of the philosophy of Pythagoras.

The knowledge of physics was regarded both by Zenophanes and Parmenides as delusive and vain. This impossibility of physical knowledge had, as we have seen, filled Zenophanes with a sort of despair threatening to end in absolute scepticism. Parmenides was saved from this despair and scepticism by remembering that Numbers are self-evident and reliable. His sense taught him that there were many things, arising from the multiplicity of his sensuous impressions. His reason, on the other hand, taught him that there was nought existing but the One, which he did not, with Zenophanes, call God, he called it Being. His work on 'Nature' was, therefore, divided into two parts: in the first is expounded absolute truth, as reason proclaims it; in the second, human opinion, which is but a mere seeming or appearance. He maintained that thought was delusion because dependent upon organisation.

Such as to each man is the nature of his many-jointed limbs.
Such also is the intelligence of each man; for it is
The nature of limbs (organisation) which thinketh in men
Both in one and all; the highest degree of organisation gives the highest degree of thought.

All thought, therefore, derived from sense is but a *seeming*, but thought derived from reason is absolutely true. The thought that was derived from sense would naturally differ as the opinions of men differ. As sensations alter according to the senses of various persons, and, indeed, with the same persons differ at different times, so it is not difficult to demonstrate that one opinion is not more trustworthy than another, but that all are equally false, whereas the dictates of reason, such, for instance, as the science of Number, are most entirely trustworthy, and can by no possible means be proved false.

Concerning the science of Being, Parmenides did not

differ much from his predecessors Zenophanes and Pythagoras. He argued that there was but one Being, and since nothing can come out of nothing, non-Being could not be. If, therefore, Being existed, it must embrace all existence. Therefore Being, or the One, and existence, must be identical the one with the other, and were, indeed, one and the same thing.

We have seen how Parmenides distinguished between thought derived from the senses and thought derived from reason. Elsewhere he seems to think this higher thought identical with existence itself, and that lower, human thought or sensation were merely transitory modes of existence:

> Thought is the same thing as the cause of thought:
> For without the thing in which it is announced
> You cannot find the thought; for there is nothing, nor shall be,
> Except the existing.

We turn now to Zeno, the third of the Eleatics. Zeno the Eleatic, who must not be confounded with Zeno the Stoic, was born at Elea about 500 B.C., and was the pupil, or, as some think, the adopted son of Parmenides. He was fortunate in thus having from his earliest youth so distinguished and able a master. He was also fortunate in possessing personal qualities of such a kind that even without the advantage of this master, he would have been sure from his own merits to have won the approbation of all qualified to judge. He was endowed with a subtle, acute, intellect, and with such rare beauty and unselfishness of character, that he was almost an enigma to his countrymen. Naturally of a somewhat nervous and highly-strung organisation, susceptible to praise, and very sensitive to blame, he never allowed this quality to degenerate into weakness, or to interfere with him in the prosecution of what he believed to be his duty. When asked on one occasion why the blame of his countrymen should have such power of wounding him, he replied, 'If the

blame of my fellow citizens did not cause me pain their approbation would not cause me pleasure.' But although he craved for the approval of those whom he revered, and shrunk from their blame, he was utterly devoid of all worldly ambition. He devoted his life to the service of his fellow men, but declined to take the slightest reward or benefit in return. His love for his country amounted almost to a passion, and the tragical death he suffered is generally supposed to be traceable to his enthusiastic patriotism. He lived at a period when a love of freedom was very pronounced; when Greece was everywhere endeavouring to free herself from the Persian yoke. Zeno, patriotic by nature, became quickly infected with this general fever and struggle for liberty. Although he occasionally visited Athens, he never cared for it as he cared for his native place. What was his grief, then, on his return from one of these rare visits to Athens, to find that Elea had fallen into the hands of the tyrant Nearchus! His first thought was to endeavour to set his country free. He conspired against the tyrant, failed in his project, and was captured. When Nearchus interrogated him as to his accomplices, he replied by naming everyone of the courtiers. Having thus terrified his accusers, he turned to the spectators and said, 'If you can consent to be slaves from fear of what you now see me suffer, I can only wonder at your cowardice.' This speech so roused the people that they fell upon Nearchus and slew him. Zeno's death itself seems to have been tragical, although we cannot tell for certain in what manner it took place. Some say he was pounded to death in a huge mortar; but the accounts given are too varied to be at all reliable.

Zeno was not a poet like his two predecessors. He wrote in prose, and chiefly occupied himself in spreading, and making generally known, the philosophy of his revered master and teacher Parmenides. He brought into use the method of refuting error by the *reductio ad absurdu*

and was the inventor of that species of logic called Dialectics.

As Mr. Lewes says of him: 'Instead of teaching dogmatically, he began to teach dialectically. Instead of resting in the domain of pure science, and expounding the ideas of reason, he descended upon the ground occupied by his adversaries;—the ground of daily experience and sense-knowledge—and turning their ridicule upon themselves, forced them to admit that it was more easy to conceive the Many as a produce of the One, than to conceive the One on the assumption of the existing Many.'

Indeed (to quote the words of Plato), just as it had been the object of Parmenides to establish the existence of the 'One,' so, in like manner, was it the object of Zeno to establish the non-existence of the 'Many.'

Agreeably to such principles he started with the assumption that only one thing really exists, and that all others are merely modifications or appearances of that one thing. In like manner he denied the existence of motion, although of course he readily admitted the appearance of motion. This dogma against the possibility of motion he maintained by four arguments, two of which we will give. The first we quote from Mr. G. H. Lewes' 'History of Philosophy,' vol. i. p. 62:

'Motion is impossible, because before that which is in motion can reach the end, it must reach the middle point; but this middle point then becomes the end, and the same objection applies to it,—since to reach it, the object in motion must traverse a middle point, and so on *ad infinitum*, seeing that matter is infinitely divisible. Thus, if a stone be cast four paces, before it can reach the fourth it must reach the second; the second then becomes the end, and the first pace the middle: but, before the object can reach the first pace it must reach the half of the first pace, and before the half it must reach the half of that half; and so on *ad infinitum*.'

The second argument used by Zeno is the famous Achilles puzzle. We give the statement and refutation as we find it in Mill's 'System of Logic,' and also quoted by Mr. Lewes, in his 'History of Philosophy.' 'The argument is, let Achilles run ten times as fast as a tortoise, yet if the tortoise has the start, Achilles will never overtake him: for suppose them to be at first separated by an interval of a thousand feet, when Achilles has run these thousand feet the tortoise will have run a hundred, and when Achilles has run those hundred the tortoise will have got on ten, and so on for ever; therefore Achilles may run for ever without overtaking the tortoise.

'Now the "for ever" in the conclusion means for any length of time that can be supposed; but in the premisses "for ever" does not mean any *length* of time—it means any *number of subdivisions of time.* It means that we may divide a thousand feet by ten, and that quotient again by ten, and so on as often as we please; that there never need be an end to the subdivisions of the distance, nor, consequently to those of the time in which it is performed. But an unlimited number of subdivisions may be made of that which is itself limited. The argument proves no other infinity of duration than may be embraced within five minutes. As long as the five minutes are not expired, what remains of them may be divided by ten, and again by ten, as often as we like, which is perfectly compatible with there being only five minutes altogether. It proves, in short, that to pass through this finite space requires a *time which is infinitely divisible,* but not an *infinite time*; the confounding of which distinction Hobbes had already seen to be the gist of the fallacy.'

Zeno was but carrying out the principles of Parmenides in denying the actual existence of motion. There is no need, however, to remind the reader that scientifically they were both wrong. A person of the most ordinary education need not be told in these days that the existence of motio

has little or nothing to do with the appearance it presents to our senses. That so far from motion not existing except as a subjective affection of our senses, we know most certainly that there are many kinds of motion our senses utterly fail to perceive. They utterly fail to perceive all movement that is very rapid, as they equally fail to perceive all movement that is very slow. Nay, when we remember that the phenomenon of light and the phenomenon of sound are entirely caused by vibrations, that is to say, a certain kind of motion; when we think of the wonderful energies imprisoned within the microscopic hair of a plant,[1] which we commonly regard as a passive organism; when we remember that in every drop of our blood there exists an innumerable multitude of little, circular, discoidal, bodies or corpuscles, exhibiting a marvellous activity, and changing with the greatest rapidity; when indeed, we devote our time to the slightest study of molecular physics, or the slightest study of chemistry, or of optics, or acoustics, we are tempted to exclaim that so far from holding that motion does not exist apart from our senses, we may almost maintain the exact converse, and pronounce that, though to our senses there is an appearance of rest, rest in itself and considered absolutely does not exist.

But although scientifically these ancient philosophers have been proved to be wrong, it is quite open to question whether they were so philosophically. Nay, it is even open to question whether the discoveries and improvements effected by modern science do not actually throw some light and verification upon these early philosophical speculations. Take for instance the doctrine most prominent both in the Pythagorean and Eleatic systems of philosophy—the doctrine that the All or the Many are contained in and come from the One. I cannot but think that the modern theory of the Correlation of Forces tends greatly to verify

[1] For information on this interesting subject see 'The Physical Basis of Life' in Lay Sermons, Reviews, and Addresses, by T. H. Huxley.

this ancient hypothesis; and at the risk perhaps of a digression, I shall venture upon entering at some length into the explanation of this theory, partly because I believe it to be one of the most pregnant and suggestive discoveries of modern times, but chiefly because I believe that in a chapter devoted to the philosophy of the Eleatics such a digression (if it be one) is by no means out of place, for we may be sure that could the Eleatics have foreseen this discovery they would have eagerly welcomed it as a proof of the correctness of their own theory.

'The various affections of matter (says Mr. Grove, writing some fifteen or twenty years ago)[1] which constitute the main objects of experimental physics, such as heat, light, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, and motion, are all correlative, or have a reciprocal dependence, so that neither taken abstractedly can be said to be the essential cause of the others, but that either may be convertible into, or produce, any of the others; thus heat may mediately or immediately produce electricity, electricity may produce heat, and so on of the rest, each merging itself as the force it produces becomes developed: and that the same must hold good of other forces, it being an irresistible inference from observed phenomena that a force cannot originate otherwise than by devolution from some pre-existing force or forces. . . . . Whether the regarding electricity, light, magnetism, &c. as simply motions of ordinary matter be or be not admissible, certain it is that all past theories have resolved, and existing theories do resolve, the actions of these forces into motion. Whether it be that on account of our familiarity with motion, we refer other affections as to a language which is most easily construed and capable of explaining them; whether it be that it is in reality the only mode in which our minds, as contradistinguished from our senses, are able to conceive material agencies, certain it is, that since the period at which the mystic

[1] 'The Correlation of Physical Forces,' 3rd edition.

notions of spiritual or preternatural powers were applied to account for physical phenomena, all hypotheses framed to explain them have resolved them into motion. Take for instance the various theories of light: one of these supposes light to be a highly rare matter, emitted from, *i.e.* put in *motion* by, luminous bodies; a second supposes that the matter is not emitted from luminous bodies, but that it is put into a state of vibration or undulation, *i.e.* *motion*, by them; and thirdly, light may be regarded as an undulation or *motion* of matter, propagated by undulations of air, glass, &c. In all these hypotheses we have but two conceptions—matter and motion.'

Now this theory of the identity of motion with every other force, Mr. Justice Grove, writing some fifteen or twenty years ago, was of necessity obliged to put forward more or less hypothetically. But in the ninth edition of Mr. Mill's 'System of Logic' (vol. i. p. 402) there is a very clear and succinct explanation of the whole theory (or fact as it may now be called) up to a much later time.

'Since the first publication of the present treatise (says Mr. Mill), the sciences of physical nature have made a great advance in generalisation through the doctrine known as the Conservation or Persistence of Force. This imposing edifice of theory, the building and laying out of which has for some time been the principal occupation of the most systematic minds among physical enquirers, consists of two stages: one of ascertained fact, the other containing a large element of hypothesis.

'To begin with the first. It is proved by numerous facts both natural and of artificial production, that agencies which had been regarded as distinct and independent sources of force—heat, electricity, chemical action, nervous and muscular action, momentum of moving bodies—are interchangeable, in definite and fixed quantities, with one another; what is new in the theory is a more accurate estimation of what this production consists in. What happens

is that the whole or part of the one kind of phenomena disappears, and is replaced by phenomena of one of the other descriptions, and that there is an equivalence in quantity between the phenomena that have disappeared and those which have been produced, insomuch that if the process be reversed the very same quantity which had disappeared will reappear without increase or diminution. Thus, the amount of heat which will raise the temperature of a pound of water one degree of the thermometer will, if expended, say in the expansion of steam, lift a weight of 772 pounds one foot, or a weight of one pound 772 feet: and the same exact quantity of heat can, by certain means, be recovered, through the expenditure of exactly that amount of mechanical motion.

'The establishment of this comprehensive law has led to a change in the language in which the scientific world had been accustomed to speak of what are called the Forces of nature. Before this correlation between phenomena most unlike one another had been ascertained, their unlikeness had caused them to be referred to so many distinct forces. Now that they are known to be convertible into one another without loss, they are spoken of as all of them results of one and the same force, manifesting itself in different modes. This force (it is said) can only produce a limited and definite quantity of effect, but always does produce that definite quantity, and produces it, according to circumstances, in one or another of the forms, or divides it among several, but so as (according to a scale of numerical equivalents established by experiment), always to make up the same sum; and no one of the manifestations can be produced save by the disappearance of the equivalent quantity of another which in its turn, in appropriate circumstances, will reappear undiminished. This mutual interchangeability of the forces of nature, according to fixed numerical equivalents, is the part of the new doctrine which rests on irrefragable fact.

'To make the statement true, however, it is necessary to add, that an indefinite, and perhaps immense, interval of time may elapse between the disappearance of the force in one form and its reappearance in another. A stone thrown up into the air with a given force and falling back immediately will, by the time it reaches the earth, recover the exact amount of mechanical momentum which was expended in throwing it up, deduction being made of a small portion of motion which has been communicated to the air. But if the stone has lodged on a height, it may not fall back for years or perhaps ages, and until it does the force expended in raising it is temporarily lost, being represented only by what, in the language of the new theory, is called potential energy. The coal imbedded in the earth is considered by the theory as a vast reservoir of force, which has remained dormant for many geological periods, and will so remain until, by being burnt, it gives out the stored-up force in the form of heat. Yet it is not supposed that this force is a material thing which can be confined by bounds, as used to be thought of latent heat when that important phenomenon was first discovered. What is meant is that when the coal does at last, by combustion, generate a quantity of heat (transformable like all other heat into mechanical momentum and the other forms of force) this extrication of heat is the reappearance of a force derived from the sun's rays, expended myriads of ages ago in the vegetation of the organic substances which were the material of the coal.

'Let us now pass to the higher stage of the theory of Conservation of Force, the part which is no longer a generalisation of proved fact but a combination of fact and hypothesis. Stated in few words it is as follows:—That the Conservation of Force is really the Conservation of Motion, that in the various interchanges between the forms of force, it is always motion that is transformed into motion. To establish this it is necessary to assume motions which are hypothetical. The supposition is that there are motions

which manifest themselves to our senses only as heat, electricity, &c., being molecular motions, oscillations, invisible to us, among the minute particles of bodies, and that these molecular motions are transmutable into molar motions (motions of masses), and molar motions into molecular. Now there is a real basis of fact for this supposition: we have positive evidence of the existence of molecular motion in these manifestations of force. In the case of chemical action, for instance, the particles separate and form new combinations, often with a great visible disturbance of the mass. In the case of heat the evidence is equally conclusive, since heat expands bodies (that is, causes their particles to move *from* one another), and if of sufficient amount, changes their mode of aggregation from solid to liquid or from liquid to gaseous. Again, the mechanical actions which produce heat—friction and the collision of bodies—must from the nature of the case produce a shock, that is, an internal motion of particles, which indeed, we find, is often so violent as to break them permanently asunder. Such facts are thought to warrant the inference that it is not, as was supposed, heat that causes the motion of particles, but the motion of particles that causes heat, the original cause of both being the previous motion (whether molar or molecular—collision of bodies or combustion of fuel) which formed the heating agency. This inference already contains hypothesis: but at least the supposed cause, the intestine motions of molecules, is a *vera causa*. But in order to reduce the Conservation of Force to Conservation of Motion, it was necessary to attribute to motion the heat propagated, through apparently empty space, from the sun. This required the supposition (already made for the explanation of the laws of light) of a subtle ether pervading space, which, though impalpable to us, must have the property which constitutes matter, that of resistance, since waves are propagated through it by an impulse from a given point. The ether must be

supposed (a theory not required by the theory of light) to penetrate into the minute interstices of all bodies. The vibratory motion supposed to be taking place in the heated mass of the sun is considered as imparted from that mass to the particles of the surrounding ether, and through them to the particles of the same ether in the interstices of terrestrial bodies, and this, too, with a sufficient mechanical force to throw the particles of those bodies into a state of similar vibration, producing the expansion of their mass and the sensation of heat in sentient creatures. All this is hypothesis, though, of its legitimacy as hypothesis, I do not mean to express any doubt. It would seem to follow from this theory that force may and should be defined matter in motion. This definition, however, will not stand, for, as as has already been seen, the matter need not be in *actual* motion. It is not necessary to suppose that the motion afterwards manifested is actually taking place among the molecules of the coal during its sojourn in the earth, (although accredited authorities have supposed that molecular motion, equivalent in amount to that which will be manifested in the combustion of the coal, is actually taking place during the whole of the long interval, if not in the coal, yet in the oxygen which will then combine with it), certainly not in the stone which is at rest on the eminence to which it has been raised. The true definition of Force must be not motion but Potentiality of Motion; and what the doctrine, if established, amounts to, is not that there is at all times the same quantity of actual motion in the universe, but that the possibilities of motion are limited to a definite quantity, which cannot be added to, but which cannot be exhausted, and that all actual motion which takes place in Nature is a draft upon this limited stock. It needs not all of it have ever existed as actual motion. There is a vast amount of potential motion in the universe in the form of gravitation which it would be a great abuse of hypothesis to suppose to have been stored

up by the expenditure of an equal amount of actual motion in some former state of the universe. Nor does the motion produced by gravity take place, as far as we know, at the expense of any other motion, whether molar or molecular. . . . . How then shall we have to express these facts if the theory be finally substantiated that all Force is reducible to a previous Motion? We shall have to say that one of the conditions of every phenomenon is an antecedent motion. But it will have to be explained that this need not be *actual* motion. The coal which supplies the force exerted in combustion is not shewn to have been exerting that force in the form of molecular motion in the pit; it was not even exerting pressure. The stone on the eminence *is* exerting a pressure, but only equivalent to its weight, not to the additional momentum it would acquire by falling. The antecedent, therefore, is not a force in action; and we can still only call it a property of the objects by which they would exert a force on the occurrence of a fresh collocation. The collocation, therefore, still includes the force. The force said to be stored up is simply a particular property which the object has acquired. The cause we are in search of is a collocation of objects possessing that particular property. When, indeed, we inquire further into the cause from which they derive that property, the new conception introduced by the Conservation theory comes in: the property is itself an effect, and its cause, according to the theory, is a former motion of exactly equivalent amount, which has been impressed on the particles of the body, perhaps at some very distant period. But the case is simply one of those we have already considered, in which the efficacy of a cause consists in its investing an object with a property. The force said to be laid up, and merely potential, is no more a really existing thing than any other properties of objects are really existing things. The expression is a mere artifice of language convenient for describing the phenomena: it is unnecessary

to suppose that anything has been in continuous existence except an abstract potentiality. A force suspended in its operation, neither manifesting itself by motion nor by pressure, is not an existing fact, but a name for our conviction that in appropriate circumstances a fact would take place. We know that a pound weight, were it to fall from the earth into the sun, would acquire in falling a momentum equal to millions of pounds, but we do not credit the pound weight with more of actually existing force than is equal to the pressure it is now exerting on the earth, and that is exactly a pound. We might as well say that a force of millions of pounds exists in a pound, as that the force which will manifest itself when the coal is burnt is a real thing existing in the coal. What is fixed in the coal is only a certain property; it has become fit to be the antecedent of an effect called combustion, which partly consists in giving out under certain conditions a given definite quantity of heat.

'We thus see that no new general conception of Causation is introduced by the Conservation theory. The indestructibility of Force no more interferes with the theory of Causation than the indestructibility of Matter, meaning by Matter the element of resistance in the sensible world. It only enables us to understand better than before the nature and the laws of some of the sequences.

'This better understanding, however, enables us, with Mr. Bain, to admit as one of the tests for distinguishing Causation from mere concomitance, the expenditure or transfer of energy. If the effect, or any part of the effect, to be accounted for, consists in putting matter in motion, then any of the objects present which has lost motion has contributed to the effect; and this is the true meaning of the proposition, that the cause is that one of the antecedents which exerts active force.'

We find, then, from the above, that by this new theory of the correlation of Forces, agencies which had been regarded

as distinct and independent sources of Force, such as heat, electricity, chemical action, etc., are interchangeable in definite and fixed quantities with one another. But we also find that heat, electricity, etc., are but molecular motions or oscillations, invisible to us among the minute particles of bodies, and that these molecular motions are transmutable into molar motions (motions of masses), and molar motions into molecular. That is to say, in the various interchanges which take place between the forms of Force, it is always Motion that is transformed into Motion; or, in other words, the conservation of Force is in reality the conservation of Motion.

Every force, then, is but a different mode or condition of the one force Motion. We have at last arrived at some thing like a first principle. It is not air, or fire, or earth, or water, that is the first principle of all things, but Motion it is that is the first principle. All forces proceed from it, or else are different modes of it. The whole phenomena of the entire universe, either directly or indirectly, owe their origin to it; for heat, light, etc., are but forms of Motion, and, as far as we are capable of knowing, not a single plant, or vegetable, or animal, could have existed, or will exist, wholly destitute of light, heat, and other modes of Motion. The Eleatics, then, were right in saying, All comes from One. All does come from One, and the outward manifestation that One presents is Motion.

Yet we must not forget that Motion, after all, is not an entity or substance; on the contrary, we must carefully remember that it is but a mode or condition. What, then, is the cause of that mode or condition? We know not. The most acute minds among us seem to be coming to the somewhat dreary conclusion, that we never shall or can know. If we could discover the cause of this Motion we should in all probability be discovering the Efficient Cause of the entire Universe; for, as we said before, the whole phenomena of the Universe resolve themselves into

Motion—Motion either actual or else potential, but always Motion. Yet, since we cannot conceive any mode or condition such as Motion acting independently of some substratum or Cause, we are forced to admit at least the hypothesis of Cause, even though in the same breath we pronounce that Cause to be unknown or even unknowable. Nay, does not the word 'Unknowable' itself imply a real veritable *something* not capable of being known? What, then, shall we denominate this mysterious Cause of which the scarcely less mysterious Motion is the outward manifestation? Shall we, with Zenophanes, call it God; or, with Parmenides, Being; or, with Pythagoras, The One; or, with Anaxagoras, Intelligence; or shall we, with modern philosophy, call it the Unknown or Unknowable? What matters it? In reality we are all meaning identically the same; and our different names are but differences in *name* only for precisely one and the same thing, *i.e.* the Efficient Cause of the entire Universe.

But pantheism would go further than this, and would not content herself with so vague a phraseology. She, too, would gladly welcome this new theory of the Correlation of Forces as a proof of the correctness of her own theory. But in her phraseology, God would not merely be conceived to be as the Cause of Motion, but in addition to the Cause, He would be represented as being likewise the Pervader of Motion; that is to say, being both Cause and Pervader, He would be necessarily identical with Motion. And, indeed, I know not how or in what we could more worthily conceive the First Cause than thus identifying Him with Motion. From the tiniest drop of our blood, with its multiplicity of corpuscles ever varying and changing; or from the condition of unceasing activity, in which the protoplasmic layer of the hair of a nettle-plant is seen to be in when viewed with a sufficiently high magnifying power, up to the perpetual motion of the earth, and moon, and planets; or again, up to the huge suns and mighty systems

of suns, Motion is the pervading influence, Motion is the predominating power. We cannot conceive when this Motion commenced to be; we equally cannot conceive when it shall cease to exist. It varies in degree as in form; but Motion it always is, Motion it will always be. It may travel in the form of Light at the inconceivable rapidity of 195,000 miles in one second of time, or it may disclose itself so slowly, as in the growth of an animal or child, that it is difficult to distinguish any change that is perceptible from week to week, or even from month to month. It may take the form of the most exquisite colours or melodious sounds. It may disclose itself in burning, scorching heat, or in radiant, frigid, crystals of ice. And if this be not enough, if physical phenomena be deemed a too unworthy manifestation of God, what shall we say of the Mind? Surely Motion discloses itself here with as much wondrous power as in any physical phenomena. In a second of time we can transport our thoughts to scenes that occurred in the days of our childhood and youth. Long forgotten events, faintly remembered faces, looks, and words, suddenly return to us in less than a moment of time. Why or wherefore they come we know not. We only know that they pass before us like a flash of light, as rapidly and as suddenly. Or (and who has not done this in extreme youth?) we may propel ourselves in fancy into the period of our prime or middle age, and build our airy castles of love and ambition: in a moment of time leap over twenty years, and never be struck with wonder that our thoughts are thus capable of this rapid movement. Why should we be surprised indeed? Motion is the fundamental influence and pervading principle of all our thoughts; and the difficulty and surprise to us would be, not the fact of the rapid movement of our thoughts, but if by any chance we should be able to keep them without movement. This with us would be considered a much greater difficulty or, rather, impossibility

For by no force of will that we can exert, are we able to keep our thoughts for more than a few minutes at a time without travelling and rapidly moving. By this same all-pervading Motion they are impelled to constantly be moving and changing as much as the stone is impelled to fall to the ground, the steel to move to the magnet, the blood to circulate in our veins, or the earth to rotate upon her axis.

If, then, by the light of modern science the outcome of pantheistic philosophy be thus the identification of God with Motion, such a conception, at all events, is not an irreverent one. No other conception would so completely depict Him as the pervading Principle of the entire Universe—no other conception would more thoroughly represent Him as that mysterious Power which dwells within us, around us, and without us; upon whom we are completely dependent, yet who is utterly independent of us. Any way, it is a more reverent and exalted conception of Him than the usual anthropomorphic conception, in which He is depicted as a man with hands and feet and arms, and even some of the passions, like as we have, only somewhat more powerful and exalted.

However, we must bring this somewhat lengthy digression to a close. Whether the reader accept the Pantheistic hypothesis or not, enough has been said to show that modern science strikingly confirms the doctrine most prominent in the philosophy of the Eleatics, the doctrine that sets forth the principle that the All is derived from the One. And that this One is Motion is now almost beyond doubt, however we may differ as to what Motion itself is.

Before we bring this chapter to a close we must slightly touch upon the doctrines of two philosophers, who, though not generally considered to belong entirely to the Eleatic school, were yet very considerably influenced by it. These two philosophers are Empedocles of Agrigentum, and Euclid of Megara.

There is nearly as much uncertainty about the life and history of Empedocles as about that of Pythagoras. Some say he was taught by Pythagoras and Anaxagoras; others, by Zenophanes and Parmenides. But since the most reliable date of his birth appears to be about 444 B.C., it is most improbable that he was taught by either one of these philosophers, as he must have been at least sixty years younger than the latest of them. If he aspired to be or do half as much as fable has assigned him, he must have been a quack and an impostor. It is said that he proclaimed himself to be a god whom men and women were reverently to adore; that he was able to command the winds and the rain, and that after a sacred festival he was drawn up to heaven in a splendour of celestial effulgence. Another and more popular account of his death is, that he threw himself headlong into the crater of Mount Ætna, in order that (since his death would then be unknown) he might be taken by the common people for a god. Most probably, however, these are merely the exaggerations of fable, and that Empedocles was too true and too earnest a man to wish to be taken for other than he was. The few writings belonging to him that have come down to us seem certainly at variance with any pretence of omniscience on his part. He seems almost to equal Zenophanes in his despairing lamentations at the difficulty of attaining any real knowledge. Listen to this for instance:—

> Swift-fated and conscious, how brief is life's pleasureless portion!
> Like the wind-driven smoke, they are carried backwards and forwards,
> Each trusting to nought save what his experience vouches;
> On all sides distracted, yet wishing to find out the whole truth,
> In vain; neither by eye nor ear perceptible to man,
> Nor to be grasped by mind: and thou, when thus thou hast wandered,
> Wilt find that no further reaches the knowledge of mortals.[1]

These are strangely sad lines to fall from a man who is supposed to have considered himself as a god; more

[1] In these fragments of the writings of Empedocles, I have again made use of Mr. Lewes's translation as given in his 'History of Philosophy.'

especially as there was nothing in his worldly condition to render him mournful, or liable to feelings of pessimism. He was born of a wealthy and noble family, and all the advantages that education and travel could bestow were given to him. It is just possible that when travelling he may have learnt some of those arts of magic for which the East has been so long and so justly famed, and thus afforded some slight foundation for the legends and myths that were afterwards so diligently circulated. It is said that he spent most of his wealth in a very singular manner, namely, in bestowing dowries on very poor girls, and marrying them to young men of rank and fortune.

Empedocles resembled Anaxagoras and the Eleatics in rejecting the trustworthiness of the senses, and he resembled Zenophanes in particular in his attacks on anthropomorphism. God, he says, is utterly unlike to man in any particular:

> He is, wholly and perfectly, mind ineffable, holy,
> With rapid and swift-glancing thought pervading the whole world.

He resembled Pythagoras in his doctrine of metempsychosis and consequent abstinence from animal food. He thought that nothing was imperishable; that there was no beginning and no end; only a mingling and a separation of that which was mingled. They are fools, he exclaims,

> Who think aught can begin to be which formerly was not,
> Or, that aught which is, can perish and utterly decay.
> Another truth I now unfold: no natural birth
> Is there of mortal things, nor deaths destruction final;
> Nothing is there but a mingling, and then a separation of the mingled,
> Which are called a birth and death by ignorant mortals.

The four primary Elements he believed to be Earth, Air, Fire, and Water: out of these all other things proceed, all things are but various combinations of these four, and Love is the combiner. But there is also a separator. To this Empedocles gave the name of Hate. We perceive,

therefore, that Empedocles differed from the Eleatics in their principal doctrine. He did not believe that all came from One; he did not believe that One was the cause of the many. He had recourse to two principles. The Formative Principle was Love; the Destructive, Hate. Yet he did not believe these principles to be equal in power. He seems to have regarded Hate something in the way that ordinary Christians regard the Devil: as decidedly inferior to God, though acting independently of Him. His conception of God was that of Love, the One, 'a sphere in the bosom of harmony fixed, in calm rest, gladly rejoicing.'

Now, although at first sight it may appear that the doctrine of Empedocles was somewhat inferior to that of the Eleatics, inasmuch as a belief in the One seems a higher conception of God than a belief in the Two, still there is thus much to be said for the doctrine of Empedocles, that undoubtedly in the universe there do appear to be two principles warring against each other, and consequently forcing one on at times to a belief in dualism. So Empedocles called that perfect state of existence, spiritual and supramundane, where Love was the supreme ruler, Harmony; the imperfect state of worldly existence, where Hate was the prevailing power, he called Discord. He maintained that Like could only be known by Like. Through earth we learn the earth, through fire we learn fire, through strife we learn strife, and through love we learn to comprehend love; and, consequently, that a recognition of the Divine is a proof that the Divine exists.

Such is a very brief account of the doctrine of Empedocles. We must now turn to the philosophy of Euclid of Megara. Euclid, who must not be confounded with Euclid the great mathematician, was born at Megara somewhere about 450–440 B.C. He was far more entirely Eleatic in his doctrines than was Empedocles. Indeed, we may say, with a very fair amount of assurance, tha

had he lived at the same period with Zenophanes, Parmenides, and Zeno, he would not have differed from them more than each one of those philosophers differed from the other. The sole and only difference between the philosophy of the Eleatics and the philosophy of Euclid of Megara was a difference entirely owing to the fact that the three Eleatics lived prior to the age of Socrates, and Euclid lived subsequent to that age.

Before the time of Socrates philosophers were occupied either (as in the case of the Ionians) with the investigation of the physical universe; or else (as in the case of the Eleatics) with the investigation of Being. With Socrates philosophy passed into a new phase, so to speak. Moral investigation was of more importance to him than either mental or physical investigation. It was of little importance to him to learn why or wherefore the world came into existence; it was not even of very much importance for him to know of the nature of God or Being; or even if it were of importance, past experience had shown how utterly futile were all such attempts at knowledge which was beyond the attainment of man. Why or wherefore the world was created was indeed a problem; but that somehow or other the world *was* created, and that he himself was in this world, was a fact. Being, then, in this world, was not the most important discovery for him to make, the discovery of how to comport himself while existing in this same world? Should not the principal endeavour of his life be to learn how to attain the good, how to shun the evil? We perceive, then, that with Socrates the investigation of the physical universe or of Being was supplemented by the study of Ethics.

Now Socrates was born 469 B.C. Consequently he was about twenty years older than Euclid of Megara. Euclid was one of his most ardent disciples, and his delight in listening to him was so great that he frequently risked his life for the sake of so doing. After the death of Socrates

many of his disciples left Athens and followed Euclid to Megara.

The philosophy of Euclid is very obviously a combination of the philosophy of the Eleatics and the philosophy of Socrates. A great portion of his youth had been devoted to the study of the writings of Parmenides and Zeno; and, as we said before, he was a most ardent admirer of Socrates, coming the distance of twenty miles at night, disguised as a woman, in order to have the privilege of listening to him; and the teachings of these two different systems are very clearly represented in the philosophy of Euclid.

Euclid agreed with the Eleatics in thinking that there was only One Being that really existed; phenomena had merely a transitory existence; but that everything was contained in this One Being. But what was this One Being? (Here the Socratic element comes in.) This One Being, capable of being known by reason alone, was *The Good.* He might receive different names at different periods. He might at times be fitly called Wisdom; at other times Reason; at other God. But The Good was His real name. He was the One Existence. Every other created thing, such, for instance, as Evil, came under the denomination of phenomena, and consequently had only a transitory and not an actual existence.

Such is a brief account of the philosophy of Euclid of Megara. He was the last of those philosophers who can in any manner be considered as belonging to the Eleatic school of philosophy; and, indeed, an interval of some four hundred years occurs before pantheism of any description reappears and discloses itself amidst the multiplicity of Greek philosophies and systems.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEO-PLATONISTS.

IT may appear strange to some that in a work like this, where we have not scrupled to represent such men as Pythagoras and the Ionians as having in more or less degree influenced and opened the way up to pantheistic philosophy (although, of course, they themselves cannot be called wholly pantheistic in their tenets), that we should not reckon Plato amongst the number of those whom we might at all events denominate *imperfect* pantheists. Plato with his three principles of God, Matter, and Ideas; Plato with his doctrines of Reminiscence and of innate ideas; Plato with his strong belief in the immortality of the soul; Plato with his doctrine of the One Universal Existence, of which all other objects were but transitory phenomena: surely such a teacher should, to say the least of it, be considered as pantheistic in his tenets as a Thales or an Anaximander. Yet we have two reasons which we think may be considered sufficient justification for our not thus treating of him. The first is that he never repudiated the popular belief in polytheism, but, on the contrary, tacitly implied his entire acceptance of it; in which case, if he really believed in a plurality of gods, by no possible means could he have been a pantheist; for, as we have often remarked, pantheism is always the strictest monotheism. Secondly, and chiefly, it is almost as difficult for us to decide upon what were the real opinions of Plato, either religious or philosophical, as it would be for us to decide upon what were the

philosophical or religious opinions of Shakspere. Plato almost entirely wrote in dialogues, but we have no reason to infer that his own opinions were such as he put into the mouths of his several *dramatis personæ*; even if we did so infer we should not know which of those opinions to choose, for he is almost as catholic in his views as Shakspere himself. And we might nearly as well maintain, for instance, that Shakspere was strongly opposed to the marriage between a woman and her deceased husband's brother, because he has made an injured Hamlet designate such a marriage as incestuous, as maintain that Plato was portraying his own opinions through the speeches of any of the *dramatis personæ* of the dialogues. If there were any one of these *dramatis personæ* more likely than another for Plato to select as his mouthpiece, it would surely be his revered master and teacher Socrates. Yet what do we find? In the Protagoras, Plato represents Socrates as maintaining that the Good is identical with the Pleasurable, and the Evil identical with the Painful; and in the Gorgias he is represented as maintaining exactly the reverse. At one time we find Plato displaying a sort of theological rancour against those who ventured to question the authenticity of the Greek fables and legends. At another time we find him exhibiting as great a purity of pantheistic conception as the Eleatics themselves; we find him declaring that God, or the Good, was the supreme Idea, the Cause of all things celestial and terrestrial, the One Being who comprised within Himself all other beings. It is hopeless, therefore, to seek to gain any real knowledge of the true opinions of Plato; and we have, consequently, thought it wiser not to borrow so doubtful an aid in illustration of the general tenets of pantheism.

But although we have refused to designate the teaching of Plato as pantheistic, that teaching, nevertheless, gave rise to a system of philosophy calling itself by his name, though arising nearly four hundred years after his death,

which was wholly and entirely pantheistic in its principles. That system called itself by the name of the Neo-Platonic Philosophy; and its disciples were pantheists, not in the doubtful sense of Anaximenes or Pythagoras, but wholly and completely pantheists as much as were the Eleatics themselves. The pantheism of the Neo-Platonists, if is true, differed from that of the Eleatics, but it differed in kind, not in degree. The pantheism of the Eleatics was a philosophy; the pantheism of the Neo-Platonists was a Theology; and in order to be able to trace the reason why Theology had thus taken the place of Philosophy, it is necessary to give a slight sketch of the gradual changes through which Philosophy had passed during these four hundred years.

We must recollect that Anaxagoras, as well as the Eleatics, had come to the conclusion that the Senses were deceptive and unreliable, and gave us no criterion of Truth; and that consequently Reason was to take the place of Sense as a guide in life. But for the investigation of the physical universe, or of Being, even Reason seemed scarcely adequate or sufficient; and a kind of dreary, painful uncertainty was the result. After the Eleatics arose Socrates, who, perceiving the uselessness and futility of all enquiry into the Why or Wherefore of phenomena, was determined to devote himself instead to the study and investigation of Conduct. With Socrates, therefore, Philosophy was passing into an ethical phase. After Socrates came Plato, whose chief doctrine (as far as we can glean from such a conflicting and contradictory confusion of doctrines) was that all knowledge was Reminiscence, a revival of pre-existing Ideas. Then followed Aristotle, utterly opposed to the Subjective Method of Plato. He taught that complete knowledge could only be gained by complete experience; and it is Reason alone that is capable of teaching us how to profit by the lessons of Experience. He did not disdain Reminiscence; but by Reminiscence he meant a

past experience, whereas Plato by the same word meant a remembrance, a recollection or recalling of things that had happened in a supposed previous state of existence. Thus with Aristotle, Moral Philosophy was again changing into Mental Philosophy, and the study of Logic was taking the place of the study of Ethics. After Aristotle arose Pyrrho, the founder of the sceptical school of philosophy. In the last chapter we slightly touched upon the logical and impregnable character of his philosophy. His principal occupation consisted in the exposure of the futility of all the philosophical systems alike. He showed how the Ionians had been succeeded by Pythagoras, Pythagoras in his turn by the Eleatics, and that the Eleatics, after demolishing or rejecting the systems preceding their own, were forced to acknowledge with Anaxagoras that 'nothing could be known; nothing was certain; everything is as it appears, and as it is seldom things appear in the same light to two different persons, it follows that all sense knowledge must be utterly untrustworthy.' Pyrrho then showed how completely the Ideal theory of Plato had been refuted by Aristotle, who had exposed it by showing that it had only a Subjective and not an Objective reality. Pyrrho therefore declared all attempts at philosophy to be equally futile; that as a criterion of Truth even Reason itself had proved very little superior to Sense. Now, although Pyrrho, who was a good, honourable man, and held in universal esteem, was undoubtedly unconscious of where his system was leading, it is obvious that, by his exposure of the futility of Reason as a guide in life, he was in reality destroying the moral system of Socrates quite as much as he was destroying the philosophical systems of Aristotle, Plato, or the Ionians and Eleatics. Not that he intended to do so; on the contrary, he insisted most strongly on the cultivation of moral principles; but it is obvious that his philosophy, if logically carried out, would destroy all faith in moral investigation quite as much as it would destroy all faith in physical or

philosophical investigation. For where would be the utility of striving to seek the Good and shun the Evil, if there be no criterion of Truth to enlighten us as to what really is the Good, what really is the Evil? Pyrrho, then, may well be called the founder of the Sceptical philosophy. Consciously or unconsciously there was not a single system he had not destroyed.

How, then, or in what, was the future life of man to be spent? Should he fold his hands in silent despair, and wait till death released him from so profitless and inane a thing as life; or should he content himself with being a mere animal and leading the life of one? But man is more than an animal; or rather when he ceases to be more, he will become less than one. He will never be able to live a life completely and entirely that of an animal. Being possessed and endowed with thoughts, he must of necessity employ them; if therefore he ceases to be a man, he will quickly become a devil, and employ those thoughts in imaginations of wickedness utterly beyond the capability of any animal. How, then, should he spend his life? Were there no ways but these two—the listless idleness of despair and indifference, or the wild excesses of utter demoralisation? Yes, there was one system yet to be tried. Amongst all the philosophical systems that had been built up only to fall helplessly to pieces at the first rough blow of an outsider, there was yet one that had not been tried; one that was at least worth the experiment of erecting and waiting to see if its foundations were more sure than those of its predecessors. The groundwork of that system was the cultivation and study of Happiness, and the name of its founder was Epicurus.

Though the objective quality Goodness or the Good were a phantasm (or if a reality, a reality past the discovery of man), yet there could surely be no delusion about the subjective sensation of Happiness. Men might indeed differ as to the objects and pursuits most capable of giving

rise to the sensation of Happiness; but nobody could deny that the sensation, while it lasted, was a true, veritable feeling: a feeling of such intense enjoyment, that the investigation and pursuit of it were well worthy of being man's highest aim and chiefest study. In this new system of philosophy, then, Happiness was to be the chief study of man; Happiness was to be his being's end and aim.'

Such was the teaching of Epicurus. Yet it must be remembered that Epicurus was no sensualist. His aim was not for temporary, transitory, happiness, but for complete and entire happiness: as complete, that is to say, as it is possible for man to attain in this world. What, then, were those pleasures most likely to give the greatest amount of happiness? Not inebriety; not licentiousness. The temporary pleasure of such practices was more than nullified by the weariness and disgust that quickly followed. No, the only real happiness is to be found in such pleasures as never satiate, and the names of those pleasures are Virtue and Knowledge. Yet even these pursuits must not be carried beyond a certain limit, or they will promptly cease to be pleasures. Virtue must not be carried to the point of asceticism; Knowledge must not be carried to the point of brainweariness. We find, then, that though the aim and goal of the Epicurean philosophy consisted of Happiness, the philosophy itself—the means, that is to say, necessary for the attainment of the end—was in reality a strict Temperance. The inscription placed at the entrance of the Garden well represented the tenets of the Epicurean brotherhood: 'The hospitable keeper of this mansion, where you will find pleasure the highest good, will present you liberally with barley-cakes, and water fresh from the spring. The gardens will not provoke your appetite by artificial dainties, but satisfy it with natural supplies. Will you not be well entertained?'

But although Epicurus himself was no voluptuary or sensualist, yet in thus setting forth the doctrine that

happiness and pleasure constituted the highest good, it must be admitted that he was playing with dangerously-edged tools; he was standing on the brink of a precipice where the slightest swerve would cause complete downfall and social ruin. Disciples seldom follow the precepts of their master to the letter; and the faintest, smallest exaggeration of the philosophy of Epicurus would lead to utter perversion, if not to actual demoralisation; for there was no saying what frightful iniquities and gross barbarities might or might not be perpetrated under the plea of the personal pleasure bestowed thereby on the perpetrator. Temperance, indeed, might be considered the highest good by the calm student of philosophy, or the simple lover of nature, but would be utterly, wearily burdensome to those of fiery and impetuous dispositions. Such disciples might agree, indeed, with the aim and end of their master's philosophy, but would by no means agree in the means requisite for the attainment of such end. If Pleasure were to be their highest aim, and Temperance never provided them with pleasure, but, on the contrary, filled them with an indescribable sensation of weariness, where was the utility of trying to be temperate? It is impossible not to come to the conclusion that some such perversion of the doctrines of Epicurus must in this way have arisen, partly because the very name 'Epicurean' came soon to be used as a synonym for effeminacy and luxury, but chiefly on account of the extreme disapproval, almost amounting to rancour and virulence, with which it was received by that body of philosophers calling themselves Stoics.

Now the philosophy of the Stoics (taking its rise from Zeno) was wise and grave, and worthy of our greatest admiration. It made the cultivation of virtue its highest aim, thus in a measure imitating the Socratists; but at least three-fifths of the Stoical idea of virtue might be said to be constituted of Courage and Manhood, taking that latter word in its highest and bravest sense. Yet the Stoics were too

wise and earnest a sect to have any causeless animosities, and if the followers of Epicurus had really carried out their master's golden rule of Temperance, we can scarcely imagine why the Stoics should thus have despised and loathed the Epicurean philosophy. On the contrary, they would most probably have approved of this philosophy as wise and temperate, and likely to pave the way for the better reception of their own; for although the Stoics scorned the pleasures of the senses, they never carried that scorn to an unwise or exaggerated degree, as did the Cynics. The Stoics were not the Cynics, and must not be confounded with them. They were an offshoot of the Cynical philosophy, it is true, but they were an offshoot which managed to absorb all the good qualities of the parent tree without any of the bad; making up, indeed, by wise culture and care, for the impure and noxious soil in which it had first received birth.

The Cynics were a sect which sprang up shortly after the time of Socrates. It is said, indeed, that Antisthenes, the founder of the sect, was a pupil of Socrates, whom he greatly admired. It is, however, Diogenes of Sinope who is generally considered to be the representative of Cynicism. To live a life of virtue was, in obedience to the Socratic philosophy, the sole aim of the Cynics, but virtue with them meant much more than a renunciation of luxury and physical indulgence (which was the Stoical idea of virtue); it meant an utter dislike and contempt for the body. The more dirty and noxious the attire, the more unwholesome and unpalatable the food, the more virtuous and worthy of his ideal was a Cynic supposed to be.[1] Decency of every kind was outraged; it is even said that those acts of daily life always performed in private, save by madmen or utter savages, were scrupulously and studiously performed in public, under the plea that everything not in itself vicious

[1] According to Diog. L., a favourite maxim of the Cynics was: 'Pleasure is pernicious: I would rather be mad than glad.'

was fitted for public gaze. In many points there was a strong resemblance between the practice of the Cynics and the Asceticism of the Middle-Age Christians. There was the same filth, and dirt, and exposure, and love of self-torment, amounting with the Christians to absolute flagellations of themselves and their fellow-creatures. With the Christians the motive seems to have been the extraordinary notion that only in such a way could they please the Creator, and thus render their attainment of heaven secure; and with the Cynics the motive seems to have been, either the somewhat heroic one that Virtue was its own reward and sufficient in itself, or else the more probable one of rendering themselves obnoxious to everyone about them. Either way, anyone who might be apt to confuse the Stoical philosophy with the Cynical has but to compare the life of Diogenes the Cynic with that of Zeno the Stoic to see the immense superiority the one has over the other.

Yet in the midst of all these philosophies and systems, in the Socratic or Platonic, in the Cynic, or Stoic, or Epicurean, through each and all of them alike was to be seen the cold, logical finger of Pyrrhonism pointing in quiet satire to the multiplicity of different opinions, and asking whether any one of them could be proved to be really more tenable than another. Several hundred years had now been spent in the pursuit and study of philosophy, yet men were still warring against each other, and bewildering themselves. For what purpose? Before the time of Plato there had been the Ionians and Pythagoras, the Eleatics and Sophists; since the time of Plato there were the Cynics and Stoics and Epicureans; and yet even now men were in as much uncertainty and as divergent in opinion as when the study of philosophy was in its earliest infancy. They had not taken warning by the failures of their predecessors, and consequently generations of the best intellects had been spent in labours that were utterly

useless, utterly unprofitable. There never yet had arisen a system so completely logical and incontrovertible as to force itself to be accepted by all alike; yet even assuming the possibility of such a system arising, the fact of it appearing incontrovertible to men would not argue its incontrovertibility in reality, because men were utterly without a criterion of Truth; and even their Reason was very little more reliable than their Sense.

And truly the warnings and prohibitions of Pyrrhonism seemed unanswerable. What though the Cynics and Stoics agreed with Socrates in preaching that the cultivation of Virtue was to be man's highest aim and chiefest study? If they could not agree in the definition of what they meant by Virtue, the agreement was but one of name only. From their own point of view, the doctrines of Pythagoras and of Epicurus seem the two least open to question. Yet man craves for some higher certitude, some nobler answer, than either of these systems are capable of yielding. It is pleasant indeed to know that two and two make four, or that two sides of a triangle taken together are greater than the third. It is pleasant to know that there is at least one real fundamental truth apparently incontrovertible, at all events, one upon which all men are agreed. Yet the knowledge of the certainty of the truth of numbers was not the knowledge for which the most earnest minds were seeking. The knowledge that two and two make four will not satisfy the nobler aspirations of the soul of man.

It was the same with the doctrines of Epicurus. From their own point of view those doctrines were quite unanswerable. We cannot doubt that the subjective sensation of Happiness is, while it lasts, a real, veritable sensation of intense enjoyment. Yet Epicureanism will prove scarcely more satisfactory to the earnest enquirer after truth than did the philosophy of Pythagoras. Epicureanism is eminently a philosophy for the few, not for the many; and those few must be in all respects of the character and

stamp of Epicurus himself. It will utterly fail to satisfy the yearnings of those who are of a higher stamp; and it will, as we have seen, quickly become perverted by those of a lower. The philosophy of Epicurus seems to us peculiarly adapted to such as are of quiet, tranquil dispositions, refined intelligence, and somewhat predisposed to egoism and the gratification of personal pleasure. We can imagine the philosopher, seated in his tasteful garden, surrounded by admiring friends, discoursing tranquilly upon the attainment of Happiness, and warning his disciples from the pursuit of more abstruse questions of philosophy. But meanwhile there were earnest, burning hearts seeking and striving for something far higher than the attainment of mere personal pleasure, to whom such attainment, even if possible (which to sympathetic, unselfish dispositions is very seldom), would fail to satisfy those cravings and yearnings which alone had impelled them to turn to philosophy for aid.

'This bright, beautiful Earth, with its variety of exquisite flowers and trees, with its invariable succession of seasons, and of night and day, with its infinitude of twinkling lights placed in the firmament high up above our heads; this bright, glorious Sun, giver of Warmth and Light, rising and setting with such wonderful regularity and order; this pale, placid Moon, appearing so strangely at regular intervals—what are they? Whence do they come?

'This strange, sad phenomenon of animal life, with its wonderful capability of suffering and misery, with its multiplicity of ills and aches, with its consciousness (as in the case of man) that the higher the organisation the more capable it is of suffering, with the knowledge that not a single human being is born into the world without causing pain, and, in some cases, hours of intensest agony to the being who gives it birth; this strange phenomenon of physical Birth—what a mystery it is, almost as strange as life itself!

Yet the mysteries of both Life and Birth seem to sink into insignificance compared with the awe that is felt at Death. Whence comes death? Wherefore was life created?

'This wonderful restless mind of man, with its noble aspirations and yearnings after Good, with its marvellous capacity for knowledge and discovery, with its powers of endurance and heroism, and, alas! also, with its capacities of baseness and treachery; this poor human heart, with its capability of suffering, exceeding in intensity any amount of physical pain, with its bereavements and woes, its temptations and sins—what do they all mean? Whence comes misery? Wherefore has sin existence?'

Such were some of the questions that were perplexing the hearts of earnest men in the century immediately preceding the commencement of the Christian Era. They yearned for an answer, but no answer came. Only a sad, dreary Scepticism prevailed. Not the scepticism, be it remembered, of atheism or infidelity;—the Pyrrhonic scepticism was the scepticism of uncertainty. It was the antithesis, the exact converse of dogmatism. Dogmatism was in the habit of asserting that this happened, or that that took place. Pyrrhonism asserted nothing, knew nothing; it rejected dogmatic atheism as much as dogmatic polytheism. The wider scepticism was left for the disciples of the New Academy, a philosophy of somewhat later growth than that of Pyrrho, and which was much more dogmatic in the manner of its scepticism than was the Pyrrhonic philosophy. In these days the Academicians of our period pronounce the nature of God and of Being to be utterly Unknowable; the Pyrrhonists, on the contrary, content themselves with pronouncing them to be Unknown. To pronounce anything to be Unknowable would be considered by them as dogmatic as to pronounce it Knowable. All they would admit is that at present the Nature of God and of Being are not known. By some, indeed, it is said that the Pyrrhonists carried their uncertainty even to a

greater extent than this. 'They knew nothing; no, not even that they knew nothing. They asserted nothing; no, not even that they asserted nothing.'

Be that as it may, it was but too plain that the outcome of all the centuries spent in the study of philosophy was either a painful, dreary uncertainty, or else an absolute denial of the possibility of any knowledge. The predominant feeling of the age was Scepticism—scepticism either dogmatic or undogmatic, but always scepticism; if not in one form, then in another.

Yet man will have an answer to his enquiries; he refuses to remain long in the state of sullen or despairing acquiescence in his own ignorance. If he cannot gain an answer that is satisfactory from one teacher, he will turn for assistance to another; if one system has proved inadequate for the solution of his difficulties, he will seek the aid of some other he hopes will prove more adequate. This was what the Neo-Platonists did. This was in reality the origin and cause of Philosophy being superseded by Theology. For five centuries and upwards men had been zealous subjects, and earnest, humble students of Philosophy; and what had she given in return? Absolutely nothing. They had gone to her with all their multiplicity of doubts and difficulties, and what had she done for them? She had not only told them that she herself could give them no answer, but she had pertinaciously pronounced their doubts to be insoluble, their difficulties to be incapable of any answer. Very well, then; men would no longer submit to the sway of so unsatisfactory a teacher; they had tried her long enough. Henceforth they would leave her and devote themselves to the service of a new mistress. Philosophy should be discarded; Theology should take her place; Reason should be dethroned; Faith should reign in her stead. Such was the origin of the transmutation of Pantheistic Philosophy into Pantheistic Theology. For fifteen hundred years we shall hear little or nothing of

Philosophy, she will be almost entirely obscured and superseded by Theology. For fifteen hundred years the best intellects will be devoted to the service of Faith; and if Reason ventures so much as even to lift up her voice in her own defence she will be threatened or tortured into silence. Not that Faith became guilty of such intolerance in the time of the Neo-Platonists. She was yet in her infancy then, and had not the strength or the power to assert her real character, even if she had the will. And most probably she had not the will. Neo-Platonism was only the first germ and faintest indication of the theology that was to shortly follow; it was more, indeed, a species of religious philosophy than an actual theology, and was no haughty, intolerant despiser of other men's opinions, but was willing to take its place as a system amongst the multiplicity of systems that were then surrounding it. The only sect, the only body of doctrines it treated with unmerited contempt, and a most unphilosophical hatred, was that of the Christian which was then just struggling into existence.

The Neo-Platonists partly resembled the Eleatics, partly followed what were generally supposed to be the leading features in the Platonic philosophy; and there was also intermingled with the other doctrines a strong element of the Stoical philosophy, almost amounting, indeed, to the Cynical. The Neo-Platonists had an utter contempt and dislike for the body, with its wants and infirmities. It is said that Plotinus, one of the most distinguished of the Neo-Platonists, blushed whenever he remembered he was possessed of a body. This contempt for the body was most probably the cause of the rancour and animosity evinced by the Neo-Platonists against the teaching of the early Christians, with whom the occupations of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and tending the sick, were insisted on as positive and essential duties.

The Neo-Platonists followed the Eleatics in concen-

trating all their energies upon the investigation of God and of Being. As we have said before, the scepticism of the age was a scepticism of uncertainty, not a pronounced atheism. There had hardly been a philosophical system mooted which did not evince either an implied or actual belief in the existence of God. Scepticism did not attempt to deny the existence of this God. All it did was to deny the possibility of the human mind ever attaining any knowledge of Him. The Neo-Platonists, then, taking the existence of God as a certainty, assuming it as an incontrovertible fact, followed the Eleatics in seeking for some knowledge of Him. The Eleatics, they believed, owed their failure to the incapable method they pursued. *They* had tried the method of poor human Reason; whereas the knowledge of God was in reality the gift of God, and could be only obtained through Faith. The point of divergence, therefore, between the Eleatics and the Neo-Platonists was in the method they pursued. The Eleatics sought to comprehend the nature of God through the power of their Reason, and were forced to own that for the most part they had failed. The Neo-Platonists sought to comprehend Him through Faith, and *believed* their endeavour was successful. For the form this Faith took was that of Ecstacy; and the science of Physiology was as yet too much in its infancy for them to know that Ecstacy was a state very easily contracted when the body is half diseased from neglect and want of proper food. Yet, though disease and a state of semi-starvation might be the physical cause of the Neo-Platonists imagining themselves to be favoured with ecstatical visions and miraculous appearances, it will not entirely account for the strangely prominent place Mysticism was to take in all philosophy alike, whether Christian or heathen, for the next three hundred years. We have seen whence it arose that Faith usurped the place formerly occupied by Reason. We have now to see wherefore this Faith assumed so very mystical and oriental

a character. To do this we must make a slight digression upon the political changes Greece had undergone in the last few centuries.

Some three or four hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Greeks had settled in Lower Egypt in such numbers that, as soon as Alexander's army had occupied Memphis, they found themselves constituting the ruling class, and Egypt became in a moment a Greek kingdom. The Egyptians were henceforth to be treated as inferiors, and forbidden to carry arms. But still the wise policy of Alexander was widely different from the insensate fury displayed by the Persian king, Cambyses, on his invasion of Egypt, some two hundred years before that of the Greeks of which we are now speaking. Alexander assured the Egyptians that he came to re-establish their ancient monarchy: he went in state to the temple, and sacrificed to the sacred bull. From Memphis he floated down the Nile to the Canopic mouth, sailed round the lake Mareotis, and, landing at Racotis, laid the foundation of the new Greek capital, calling it after himself by the name of Alexandria. On the death of Alexander, his lieutenant, Ptolemy, made himself king of Egypt, and was the first of a race of monarchs who governed for three hundred years, and made it a second time the chief kingdom in the world, till it sank under its own luxuries and vices combined with the rising power of Rome. It is almost impossible to do justice to the glory and magnificence of Alexandria as it existed under the Ptolemies. It almost seemed as if the wisdom of Greece and Egypt became united in these Alexandrians. Never before, and very seldom since, could any museum boast of such a galaxy of learned names as in the Alexandrian Museum founded by the Ptolemies. It was here that Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron, and Apollonius Rhodius wrote their poems; Euclid composed his Elements of Geometry; Archimedes laid the foundation of Hydrostatics; Apollonius of Perga invented Conic Sections;

Hipparchus made a catalogue of the Stars; Erastothenes measured the size of the Earth. A large public library was also founded. Demetrius Phalareus was instructed to collect all the writings in the world, and so successful were the efforts of himself and his successors that, it is said, 700,000 volumes were procured. Every sort of religion was tolerated, and men of all creeds and of all countries flocked there. But still it was natural that the native religion of the people should have the most predominance, more especially as the Greeks were naturally inclined to scepticism, whereas the Egyptians were naturally inclined to devotion. The religion of the Egyptian lower classes was a gross and obscene Polytheism; that of the higher, a pure and refined Pantheism. In the midst of so much learning and culture it was natural the grosser forms of religion should die out, and be superseded by the higher and better forms. Yet, as the majority of men cannot live in a region of pure abstraction, but must have recourse to some outward forms and ceremonies, some representation of this pantheistic religion must be sought for. The Egyptian animal worship had become too gross for any symbolism. The representation, therefore, that was chosen was the restoration of the worship of the god Serapis. Inscribed upon his image were the words setting forth the Pantheistic doctrine 'All is God.' But accompanied with this Pantheism was a large intermixture of Mysticism, perhaps necessarily so. Was not the whole world a Mystery? How could All be One, and One be All? It was felt to be inexplicable. Yet it was felt to be at the same time true. For many thousand years the Egyptians had believed in a Trinity. In different parts of Egypt different triads were worshipped. If God could display himself in All, why not in Three? At Philae the triad worshipped consisted of Osiris, Isis, and their son Horus; at Thebes the Trinity consisted of Amun, Maut, and Khonso. But the Egyptians were not the only inhabitants of Alexandria

who were Trinitarians. As we have said before, men of all creeds and from all parts of the civilised world frequented the new Greek capital. Amongst these were many Brahmans, and it will be remembered how completely all forms of Hindoo religion were pervaded with the oriental and somewhat mystical conception of a Trinity. In the Vedas, Agni, Indra, and Surya constitute the triad: in the later Hindoo religion, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva form the Trinity. So that we may fairly conclude that more than half of the inhabitants of Alexandria at that period were Trinitarians of some description or other. It was natural that such a doctrine should have possessed a profound interest for such Greeks as were admirers and disciples of the philosophy of Plato, who, with his three principles of God, Matter, and Ideas, may be said himself to have been in some measure a Trinitarian. So that, what with their master's ideas and the Trinitarian atmosphere in which they were living, it was no wonder if the majority of the Neo-Platonists rapidly absorbed the doctrine of a Trinity, and that, in consequence, their philosophy was somewhat pervaded with Mysticism. The three principal Neo-Platonists were Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus. But there were others who, though of inferior interest, are yet of sufficient importance to merit some slight notice here.

In addition to the Greeks and Hindoos, there was a large Jewish population inhabiting Alexandria at this period. A Jewish temple had been erected by permission, and the Jewish Scriptures translated into Greek. And it was a Jew, Philo by name, who by some authorities is considered to rank as the founder of the Neo-Platonic philosophy, although by others that place is assigned to Ammonius Saccas, who lived nearly two hundred years after the time of Philo. Whether, however, Philo be the founder of Neo-Platonism or not, he certainly may be considered as one of those who in no small degree opened the way up to that philosophy; and is, moreover, sufficiently

Pantheistic in his tenets to deserve some slight mention in a treatise of this description.

Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, lived in the time of the Emperor Caligula, to whom he was sent upon an embassy for the purpose of reporting the state of his countrymen in Egypt. But with the exception of the details of the embassy which were related by himself, there are very few particulars of his life that have descended to us. He seems to have been a strict Monotheist, a sincere and earnest believer in the truth of the Hebrew Scriptures, but, at the same time, wholly free from the narrowness and exclusiveness natural to such a belief. Living and mixing in daily contact, as he did, with the Egyptians, Greeks, and Hindoos, it was natural, perhaps, he should ask himself whether of all religions the Hebrew should be in reality the only true religion; whether every other but this were wholly and entirely false; whether only one small portion of the world—the Jewish—were to be saved, and every other to perish everlastingly. And the answer he returned to such enquiries was of such a description as to lead him to acknowledge a profound reverence for the religions of the Egyptian and Hindoo, and an equally profound reverence for the wisdom of the Greek. He believed that each and all of them were inspired with a divine Word or Logos which was leading them up to Itself: teaching them to shun the Evil and seek the Good. Philo's occupation did not consist in seeking to investigate the universe, and only in a secondary degree did it even consist in investigating knowledge or learning of any description. He was not a philosopher; he was a theosopher. Or, it may be, theosophy with him included philosophy. His soul was wholly absorbed in the contemplation of God. He beheld Him in all the works of Nature, but even more clearly in the mind of man. According to Draper, he taught 'that the world is the chief angel, or first son of God; he combines all the powers of God into one Force, the Logos or

holy Word; the highest powers being creative wisdom and governing mercy. From this are emitted all the mundane forces; and since God cannot do evil, the existence of evil in the world must be imputed to these emanating forces. It is very clear, therefore, that though Philo declined oriental Pantheism, he laid his foundation on the oriental theory of emanation.'[1]

A philosopher somewhat resembling Philo in his principles, though living nearly two centuries afterwards, was Numenius the Pythagorean. There is the same sort of large-hearted tolerance and admiration of the thoughts and religions of alien nations—a tolerance that amounted at times to a kind of eclecticism. He did not believe that different nations had different gods. There was but One God displaying himself equally through the wisdom of a philosopher or the religion and devotion of a theosopher; through the higher thoughts of the Hindoo as much as in the higher actions of the Greek. 'What is Plato,' he says, 'but Moses talking Attic.' He believes that there is 'One Being who is fixed and eternal, ever the same in Itself and in the same; hath never perished, or increased, or decreased; is susceptible of no accidents, or movement, or locality.' He believed, however, that this One God was constituted of three portions or principles: the first of which was Reason; the second the principle of becoming; and the third was God, who was formed of the other two portions. To quote his own words as given in Mr. Maurice's account of him:[2] 'The primary or highest God, being in himself, is altogether simple, conversing altogether with himself, nowise to be divided. But the God who is second and third is one. Moving about, however, in matter which is dual, he unites it, and yet is divided by it: seeing that it is fluxional, and hath a certain appetitive character. Therefore, not being in direct communication with the

[1] 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. i. p. 210.
[2] 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,' vol. i. p. 303.

purely noetic—for so he would be wholly occupied with himself—by looking upon matter, he becomes occupied with that, and, as it were, unobservant, of himself. And he touches and deals with that which is sensible, and draws it up into his own proper character, stretching himself out to (or with a view to stretch himself out so as to take up) the material.' He afterwards goes on to distinguish between the primary God and the Demiurgus or Creator. 'The first must be looked upon as the father of the second, for of Him, the primary Being, it would be impious to predicate any activity. The primary God must be free from all works, and a king. But the Demiurgus must exercise government going through the heavens. Through him comes this our condition; through him Reason, being sent down in transit or efflux to hold communion with all that are prepared for it. God, then, looking down and turning Himself to each of us, it comes to pass that our bodies live and are nourished, receiving strength from the outer rays that come from Him. But when God turns us to the contemplation of Himself, it comes to pass that these things are worn out and consumed, but that the Reason lives, being made partaker of a blessed life.'

The doctrines of Numenius led in a great degree up to the doctrines of Ammonius Saccas, who by some is considered to be the founder of the Neo-Platonic philosophy. Ammonius Saccas is chiefly known through his disciple Plotinus. Of himself we know but little. He left no writings behind him; he invariably taught in secret, and always extracted a vow from those who listened to his lectures that the nature of his doctrine should not be divulged.

While Ammonius was lecturing in Alexandria there came to it a young man in the twenty-seventh year of his age, who was possessed of an earnest desire and craving for wisdom. He had been from school to school, and from doctor to doctor, but with no success. He confided his disappointment to some friend, who advised him to try

and see if the lectures of Ammonius would prove more satisfactory than had those of the former teachers. The young man gladly followed this advice, and at the very first lecture he attended, he exclaimed, 'This is the man for whom I was seeking!'

The name of this young student was Plotinus. He was an Egyptian, born about A.D. 204. He remained a pupil of Ammonius for eleven years, at the end of which period he entered the army of the Emperor Gordianus, which was then on its way to Persia, in order that he might be able to acquaint himself with the science of the Magians. After the Emperor had been slain in Mesopotamia, Plotinus escaped with some difficulty to Antioch, and in his fortieth year (during the reign of the Emperor Philip) went to Rome, where he set up a philosophical school. He did not begin to write till he was fifty years old, and his style is, in consequence, somewhat heavy and incomprehensible, thereby making a doctrine that was in itself sufficiently mystical and obscure appear very confusing indeed. The great desire of his soul was for union with God; and to become united to God it was, he thought, essential to be like God; and it is only by virtues that the human nature can be assimilated with the Divine. But yet he could not help asking himself whether a divine being like God could be possessed of human virtues. How could God be courageous, for instance, when there was nothing to fear? How could He be unselfish when there was nothing to desire? Plotinus was a firm believer in the Oriental idea of a Trinity, the first principle of which was, according to his view, the One, or the Prime Essence; the second was the Reason; and the third was the Soul. Reason, he believed, issues from the One, and the Soul issues from Reason. And in this way he was led to conceive that though virtues might not be possessed by God, yet they might nevertheless issue from Him; in the same way, for instance, as it is not absolutely necessary to suppose that a substance from which

heat has issued is of itself conscious of the sensation of heat. Plotinus thinks this illustration may suggest another inference, viz., that the heat is innate in that which communicates the heat; derivative in that which receives it. And in like manner there ought to be, if not virtue itself, something higher than virtue in Him from whom man proceeds. So that though there may be no need of what we call virtue in God, the possession of virtue may nevertheless be that which shall lead to the union of the human nature with that which is divine. Few men felt more deeply than did Plotinus the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He loathed it; he was oppressed by it, he longed to escape from it. He could not tell whence it came. Was it positive, or was it only a failure and eclipse of good? Did it belong to matter, or did it pertain to the soul? For a long time he seems to be in perplexity. In spite of his dislike and contempt for the body he cannot quite agree with the Gnostics in believing matter to be entirely the origin of evil. He cannot deem this world evil, since it is the work of God. 'The men,' he says, 'who complain of the nature of the world know not what they are doing and whither their boldness is carrying them. This is because they know not the arrangement of the different portions of the order of the world, its first, and second, and third degrees, down to the lowest of all, and that it does not become us to find fault with those things that are worse than the first, but meekly to conform ourselves to the universal nature, pressing on still towards the best, and casting aside those empty terrors, such as some are possessed with, when they contemplate the great circles of the world which in truth are procuring all blessings to them.' Nothing, then, is of itself evil. All things are evil only so far as they fall out of their proper order and place. Plotinus, however, did not spend his life very consistently with his doctrine. It is quite true, indeed, that man is possessed of a soul; and if he permit his soul and intellectual life to be subordinated to his physical life

he is in reality falling out of his proper order; he is ceasing to be a man and is degenerating into an animal. Yet, if he has a soul, he has also a body; and to wholly neglect this body is as much falling out of the divine order as to wholly neglect the soul. There is little doubt that Plotinus, in his anxiety to escape from matter, and become as God, neglected his body to such an extent that his mind became utterly diseased; and if he had lived in these days he would scarcely have been considered sane. It is said by some that he believed he had been united to God six times in sixty years. But according to others Plotinus only claimed to have been united to the perfect and absolute One two or three times. The other occasions it was only some dæmon or inferior god he was enabled to contemplate. He carried idealism to its extremest point. 'Sensuous life,' he said, 'is a mere stage-play; all the misery in it is merely imaginary; all grief a mere cheat of the players. The soul is not in the game; it looks on, while nothing more than the external phantom weeps and laments.' He believed that the great aim and goal of existence was to draw the soul from the contemplation of external things, and, separating it from individual consciousness, pass into a state of ecstacy, which is the only state in which it is possible for man to become really united to God, who is the one and absolutely perfect Being. When entreated to give his permission to have a portrait taken of himself he replied, 'Is it not humiliating enough to have to carry about a shadow with me, without having a shadow made of that shadow?' He was attacked with a pestilence which prevailed in Italy, and lost the use of his hands and feet as well as of his voice; but he persisted in rejecting all remedies, all alleviations—his sufferings thereby being terribly aggravated. A few moments before his death he said, 'I am striving to bring the divine thing which is in us to the divine which is in the universe.'

When Plotinus was nearly sixty years of age Porphyry

became his disciple; it was to Porphyry that Plotinus committed the arrangement of his books; and almost all our knowledge of Plotinus comes through Porphyry, who considers himself far inferior to his master. He declares that nothing could more distinctly prove the superiority his master had over himself than the fact that he, Porphyry, had been only united to God once in eighty-six years; whereas his master Plotinus had been united six times in sixty years. Indeed, it is evident that Porphyry regarded his master as endowed with altogether supernatural powers. He tells us that a man of the name of Olympius, an Alexandrian by birth, was for a short time a disciple of Ammonius Saccas, and, aspiring himself to the first dignity in philosophy, affected to become a despiser of Plotinus. But when Olympius strove to crush him with magical arts he found his experiments turned upon himself. For the soul of Plotinus had such power that his limbs became contracted; and whatever magical tortures he might devise for Plotinus became so instantly experienced by himself, that he could not doubt that Plotinus was possessed of supernatural and magical powers to no common degree. Porphyry seems to start from the assumption that there are a multitude of gods and dæmons; and he devotes a good deal of time and space to the distinction existing between these gods: why some are benevolent and others malevolent, whether they are with or without passions. He draws a distinction between gods, dæmons, and souls. Was it true, as it then was becoming the custom to believe, that the gods were possessed of ethereal bodies, dæmons of aërial, and souls of terrestrial? How can the appearance of a god, a dæmon, and a soul be distinguished the one from the other? For the very highest gods are presented to us in images or sensible forms. These questions he believes to be of the utmost importance, inasmuch as the knowledge of the gods is the highest of all blessings, and ignorance of them the greatest of all curses. In a letter to an Egyptian

who was named Anebon, Porphyry asks to be informed of the mysteries of the Egyptian religion—whether the Egyptians consider the First Cause Nous, or something above it; whether it is above or united with any other or others; whether it is corporeal or incorporeal; whether it is the same with Demiurgus or before him. Next he desires to hear about the dæmon who belongs to each man, whether he is an efflux, or a life, or a power. Are there different dæmons, one presiding over our health, another over beauty, and so forth? The person who answered these questions of Porphyry was not Anebon, but the teacher of Anebon, one who calls himself Abammon; who, it has been stated, was in reality Iamblichus, who ultimately became the head and representative of that division of the Neo-Platonists which made Theurgy an essential part of philosophy. The whole question of Porphyry respecting the ethereal, aërial, and terrestrial gods is thrown aside with indignation and contempt; all such corporeal divisions and limitations being utterly inconsistent with the divine nature. All things are full of the gods. The Divinity illuminates heaven and earth, holy cities and places, divine shrines, just as the sun illuminates all the corners of the entire universe.

Iamblichus fully admits the assertion of Porphyry that knowledge of the gods is the highest of all blessings and ignorance of them the greatest curse; but in order to have a right knowledge of God there must be a communion with Him: souls have a twofold relation—one to the Divinity, one to the body. Those who obtain the divine life may touch fire and not be burnt; may be struck with axes and knives on their backs and arms, and not perceive it; they may trample on fire or walk through water. This divine enthusiasm must not be called ecstacy, for it not merely carries the mind away, it translates it to something altogether higher. The true enthusiasm does not come from soul or body; it is wholly divine. The man who has it is simply possessed by the gods. Abammon next enters

somewhat at large upon the subject of sacrifice. Different kinds of sacrifices correspond to the different kinds of the gods, to the character and state of the worshipper, to the threefold division of human life—into the purely intellectual, the physical, and that which is compounded of both. Seeing that there is this proportion and relation, there must be a theurgic science to ascertain the number and orders of the gods, and the sacrifice which is appropriate to each. The greatest damage may accrue to man from leaving any one of the superior beings unheeded, or not heeded in his own proper method. Then comes out what Mr. Maurice has very rightly called 'the very essence of the whole Neo-Platonic philosophy.' Might not the sacrifices be better if they were directed to the One, and if in Him all the various substances and powers were worshipped together? Undoubtedly it would be much better if this could be done. But such a possibility comes very late and only to a very few. A man may be grateful if it happens to him at the end of his life. Entering in reply to Porphyry's question respecting the notion of a primary cause, Abammon declares that there is one God, before all the substances and principalities of the world, earlier than the first god and being, remaining unmoved in the singleness of his own unity. For neither is the intellectual interwoven with him nor anything else. He is his own archetype—his own Father—begotten from himself—*the* Good. He is the fountain of all things, the root of all intelligible forms. He is the beginning and God of gods; a monad out of the one, the first substance, and the beginning of substance. Iamblichus concludes his treatise by declaring how high and pure are the motives of the Theurgist. The Theurgist finds man fallen from the vision of God. He knows that man can only be blessed by recovering that vision: his whole business is, therefore, to lead him up by gradual steps till he connects his spirit, freed from all matter, with the eternal word. The perfect good is God himself; and the good of man is unity with God.

We have necessarily given but a very scanty outline of this celebrated treatise. If the present work were a complete History of Pantheism, instead of only a rapid sketch, we might fill many pages with the questions and answers which were discussed between Porphyry and Abammon. As it is, however, space forbids us devoting more time to this subject.

Enough has been said already to show that though the Neo-Platonists were as Pantheistic in their ideas as the Eleatics, yet Pantheistic theology had taken the place of Pantheistic philosophy, and that consequently the Neo-Platonic Pantheism was so overlaid with mysticism, thaumaturgy, and obscurity that it becomes at times very bewildering and incomprehensible.

There is one more Neo-Platonist of whom we have as yet made little or no mention. By many he is considered to be the most capable and able of the whole body, and to whom the remaining portion of this chapter will, therefore, be devoted.

Proclus was born at Constantinople, A.D. 412, just one year before the death of the unfortunate Hypatia ; and being terrified at her tragical fate, he was determined to prosecute a system of secrecy, in compliance with which measure he adopted the moral maxim of 'Live concealed.' In spite of all his caution, however, the Christians succeeded in expelling him from Athens. With Proclus, indeed, ancient philosophy may be said to be slowly breathing its last, until within a very few short years after his death it finally expired. The Christians were rapidly becoming so powerful and so political a sect that every system of doctrine which clashed with their own they were enabled forcibly to crush out, and, in consequence, no doctrine considered to be at divergence with the teaching of the Church was allowed so much as to be mooted.

Proclus was intensely devoted to Plato, regarding his works, indeed, almost with the same devotion with which the works of the Early Fathers were regarded by the

majority of Christians. He boldly declared that the preservation of the sacred Platonical oracles, and the handing of them down from age to age, was in itself a demonstration of the existence of Providence, even were every other demonstration of that fact wanting.

There are three treatises by Proclus, the original of which is lost, but the substance of them is preserved in a Latin translation by a Corinthian archbishop; and almost within our own time the philosophy has been rendered tolerably well known through the high eulogium bestowed upon it by M. Victor Cousin.

In common with the majority of the Neo-Platonists, Proclus believed in a Trinity. 'There are three substances,' he says, 'in the noetic and hidden gods. The first is denoted by Goodness, the second by Wisdom, the third by the Beautiful. Corresponding to these noetic principles there subsist three monads, dwelling together when contemplated as the principle or cause of noetic things in one form or kind, but first of all shining forth in the unspeakable order of the gods as Faith, Truth, Love. Faith, that establisheth all things and settleth it in the Good; Truth, that unfolds all the knowledge that is in any beings; Love, that converteth all things and draweth them into the nature of the Good; and this Triad proceedeth forth to all the orders of gods, and causeth the unity so to shine forth as to come within the scope of Intelligence; but in each order it has a different manifestation, uniting its own power with the idiosyncrasies of the gods. For all things, says the oracle, in these three are governed, and are; and for that reason the gods command the Theurgists by these three to unite themselves to the God.'

The connection of Proclus with Pantheism may, we think, be seen through his speculations upon the absorption and re-absorption of the soul into the Divine essence; yet it is right to remark that in the opinion of many (notably Mr. Maurice) Proclus was not a Pantheist in the ordinary

sense of the word. 'It is the great redeeming point in Proclus,' says Mr. Maurice,[1] 'that while he looks upon the search for absolute unity as the search of the philosopher, he does not willingly reduce this unity into a dead abstraction—that he *tries* to identify it with a living Being. The effort is unspeakably difficult to him, for the Creator of the universe—and he fully admits a Creator of the universe—must, he thinks, be secondary and inferior to the one pure, unutterable essence. To mix Him with his works or even with any working is a kind of impiety. Hence . . . . . the primitive and eternal Nous soars above all the efficient and energising gods; a vision of supreme goodness rises above even that; a transcendent unity is still perceivable through this Goodness. Through tiers of beings does the poor overwhelmed seeker ascend towards this distant effulgence; or is it an opaque substance from which all effulgence has departed? And the while he feels as if this mysterious unity could not be far from him, as if it were implied in all he speaks or does, as if it were pre-supposed in the multitude of things which his eye beholds, still more in every act of his mind when he thinks of those things. He feels also as if the Absolute and Eternal One must in a direct and mysterious way be acting upon him, and as if there must be some nearer passage to it than through those orders of beings who, howsoever his intellect may arrange and compose them, introduce plurality into his thoughts, and disturb his efforts to dwell in a region that is above it.'

M. Cousin seems to think Proclus absorbed into his system all the best parts of every philosophical system, thus making him out to be a sort of Eclectic. He believes that nothing great was thought out by Iamblichus, Porphyry, or Plotinus, either in ethics, metaphysics, or in physics, which is not found expressed more clearly and methodically in Proclus. M. Cousin does not merely put Proclus at the

[1] 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,' vol. i. p. 387.

head of the Neo-Platonists, but he thinks he was superior to Aristotle and Plato, Pythagoras and Zeno. He believes he should be considered as the one interpreter of the whole philosophy of the Greeks.

This is very high praise, and, as we venture to think, very exaggerated praise. It is possible that of the Neo-Platonic system Proclus may be reckoned the ablest and best expounder; but to reckon him above Aristotle, Plato, and the Stoics is surely unjust, and in our opinion each and every one of the Eleatics is superior to any of the Neo-Platonists.

Like Plotinus, Proclus occupied himself deeply with the consideration and investigation of the nature of evil. Does evil exist, or does it not? If it does exist, does it inhabit things intellectual, or things material? 'Of all things,' he says, 'it would seem to be the most difficult to know the nature of Evil in itself, seeing that all knowledge is the knowledge of species or form. But Evil is without form, and, so to speak, privation. Perhaps, however, we may arrive at some satisfaction on this point, too, by contemplating Good in itself, and the nature of things which are good. For as the primary Good is beyond and above all things, so Evil in itself is that which is divested of all good. In so far as it is evil it is the defect and privation of this. In what wise Good subsists, and what degrees it has, has been set forth elsewhere. But Evil as Evil is that which is separated from the fountain of Good, separated in so far as it is objectless and vague from the primary object; in so far as it is weakness, from the power which dwells in that object; in so far as it is want of harmony, falsehood, or baseness, from beauty and truth, and that by which things are united; in so far as it is restless and unstable, from the abiding and eternal unity; in so far as it is privation and unvitality, from the first Monad and the life which is in it; in so far as it tends to corrupt, and divide, and make imperfect, the things with which it hath to do,

from the goodness which is bringing the universe to perfection. For the corruptive draws from that which is to that which is not; the divisive destroys the continuity and union of being; the imperfect takes from each thing the perfection and order which belongs to its own nature.'

This description of the nature of evil appears to us to be singularly clear and accurate. It does not, of course, give any satisfactory explanation of the *origin* of evil, which, after all, is the explanation most desired. It only describes the *nature* of evil, and leaves the origin entirely untouched. It informs us that evil in itself consists of negation and privation of good. *Why* and wherefore such negation and privation should exist it does not determine.

Throughout this sketch we have always represented Pantheism to be the strictest Monotheism, and it may, therefore, be objected that in calling the Neo-Platonists Pantheists, we have been somewhat inconsistent with our own doctrine, when nearly every one of the Neo-Platonists speaks of 'the gods.' When Porphyry and Plotinus speak of the whole world as being full of the gods, when Iamblichus lays down certain rules for propitiating the gods, what kind of sacrifice should be paid to each particular god, &c., 'Surely,' objectors may exclaim, 'this is not Monotheism, but Polytheism as pronounced as the Polytheism of Greek mythology.'

The objection is natural and plausible. Yet upon consideration it will be found that, though the majority of the Neo-Platonists believed in a plurality of gods, they did not in the least resemble the Greek mythologists. If they resembled any system at all they resembled that as set forth by the Vedas; but even this resemblance is not a very accurate one. The Early Greeks were Polytheists in the most comprehensive sense of the word. They believed in a plurality of gods, each of which was perfectly independent of the others; all or, at all events, the majority of

them, warring against each other, deceiving each other, and each of them capable of doing actions of which the others had no cognisance. No such Polytheism is to be found either in the Vedas or in the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists. In the Vedas a multitude of gods are invoked, it is true, but they are but different names for one and the same God. No one god is independent of the other; no deception is supposed to take place between any of them. Even in the later and more debased forms of Brahmanism, the same belief in the One for the most part prevails. Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, take the place of Indra, Agni, and Surya. But it is felt they are but different names for the One, who manifests himself in a variety of forms, this One being called indifferently Aditi or Daksha.

Now, with the Neo-Platonists there is not any kind of representation of one God under different names, but a very clear and explicit acknowledgment of a belief in a variety of gods. Plotinus at one time believes himself to have been united to the superior god, at other times to inferior gods; and it is quite natural, therefore, that to the ordinary observer Neo-Platonism should seem a species of Polytheistic philosophy. Yet, if it be remembered what Pantheism really and truly is, we think we shall be exonerated from any unfairness in having described the Neo-Platonists as being as Pantheistic in their tenets as the Eleatics. For Pantheism is that doctrine which identifies God with the entire universe, which beholds Him in the movement of the tiniest insect or in the lustre of the brilliant gem; in the mind of a Socrates or in the brain of a Newton. In the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists there was a large and unfortunate intermixture of mysticism; a strange, wild belief in miracles and ecstatical visions; and the aid of thaumaturgy and theurgy were widely employed. But though we may justly deplore this adulteration and degeneration, it in nowise detracts

from the Pantheism inherent in the philosophy. In that system there was but one God—absolute, incomprehensible, though comprehending all within Himself. The other gods were dæmons, inferior spirits. Once assuming the existence of these dæmons, it was not more difficult to imagine God disclosing Himself through the form of these dæmons than it was through the intellect of a Socrates. Socrates (or rather, in the opinion of the Neo-Platonists, it might be more appropriate to say Plato) had a larger proportion of the Divinity than an ordinary man, an animal, or plant. Why might not the dæmons in their turn be possessed of a larger portion of the Divinity than even a Socrates or Plato? The Neo-Platonists devoted the greater portion of their thoughts and time to seeking for an acquaintance and communion with God, and they believed they had attained the desired consummation when they fell into a trance or state of ecstacy; this ecstacy or enthusiastic frenzy being in their opinion a sign that they were possessed with God. If this enthusiasm could be carried to a rare and extreme point, then the Neo-Platonists believed themselves to be more than merely possessed with God. They believed themselves to be united to God, to be absorbed into His essence; in a word, to *be* God. The only way they could gain any real communion with God was to become God.

That such a doctrine is wild and mystical, and argues a great falling off from the philosophical investigation of the Eleatics, we readily admit; but still we shall be doing them an injustice if we represent the Neo-Platonists as being in any sort or degree believers in Polytheism. They were the strictest Monotheists. They did not even believe in dualism, as do the majority of sects calling themselves Monotheists; evil with them was no positive creation of a malignant fiend seeking to thwart the good intentions of the Creator. It was but a negation, a privation of that which was good. Men were happy and virtuous when God

gazed upon them; if He withdrew that gaze they became vicious and miserable. The more they were possessed with God the happier and better they became. Nature was arranged in a scale of degrees. The lower the organism, the less was it possessed with God; the higher the organism, the greater was the possession. Even with the dæmons there was the same order and scale of degrees. Some dæmons were possessed with God in a less degree than others were; and those who were possessed but of a comparatively small portion of Him became the inferior gods or dæmons, while those who were endowed with a larger proportion became the superior gods or dæmons; and such as were quite perfect and cleansed from all sin became united with the God; separated from matter, losing all personality and individuality, they became absorbed in the divine essence, they became parts and portions of the Universal Soul of the entire universe.

Such is a brief sketch of the Neo-Platonic philosophy. With Proclus we bid farewell to any study or investigation of philosophy for wellnigh eleven hundred years. Men will be no longer seekers for wisdom; they will scarcely even be seekers for God. They will believe that both God and Wisdom had been miraculously revealed to them, and that in that revelation was included all science, all philosophy, all learning. They will believe that any attempt at investigation either of philosophy or science would be a terrible act of impiety, punishable with torture and death in this world, eternal torments in the next. The few great intellects that manage to struggle into existence through all this chaos of dogmatic ignorance will be forced to confine their dialectical subtlety to one dreary and unproductive occupation—that of trying to extract different interpretations from one and the same relation; and, for the most part, regarding all those who ventured to differ from their particular interpretation with a virulence and rancour amounting at times to actual deeds of murder and outrage.

Reason has been dethroned, and Faith has usurped her place. Most unfortunate has been this dethronement; most unhappy will be the fruits of this usurpation. If Reason had been an unsatisfactory sovereign, at least she was an honest one; tolerant, moreover, and merciful. The difficulty of coming to any right conclusion herself had made her lenient to the errors and confusions of others. Faith, on the contrary, having authority for its basis, felt no confusion, was conscious of no errors. A system of rigid dogmatism was in consequence instituted, and a religion, in its nature and very essence purer and more tender, and, at the same time, more lofty and sublime, than any that had before or since appeared, became degraded into a system of priestcraft, superstition, and heartless, bloodthirsty bigotry.

BOOK THE THIRD

MODERN PANTHEISM

The All-embracing, All-sustaining One,
Say, doth He not embrace, sustain, include
Thee? me? Himself? Bends not the sky above?
And earth, on which we are, is it not firm?
And over us, with constant kindly smile,
The sleepless stars keep everlasting watch. . . . .
And does not All—that is,
Seen and unseen, mysterious All—
Around thee and within,
Untiring agency,
Press on thy heart and mind?
Fill thy whole heart with it—and when thou art
Lost in the consciousness of happiness—
Then call it what thou wilt,
Happiness! heart! Love! God!
I have no name for it!

Anster's translation of Goethe's 'Faust.'

If God be *outside* the physical universe, those extended ideas of its vastness which modern science opens to us remove Him further and further from us; yet if He be embodied *in* it, every such extension enlarges our notion of His being.—*Dr. Carpenter's 'Mental Physiology,'* p. 708.

CHAPTER I.

DIGRESSION ON THE PAGANISATION OF CHRISTIANITY, AND CONSEQUENT DECAY OF PANTHEISM.

THE last book was, in its earlier portion, devoted to giving a somewhat detailed account of the manner in which the Greeks had set themselves to seriously study and investigate the order of physical phenomena in general; and to the consideration of the means by which they endeavoured to ascertain and discover the First Principle and Cause of all things. It next proceeded to show how, failing in this attempt, these early philosophers subsequently occupied themselves with the consideration of subjects ethical and philosophical; how, in order to assist them in their ethical and philosophical studies, they called in the aid of Reason; and how, after all their strivings and endeavours, they were compelled to admit that Reason had proved scarcely a more satisfactory teacher than Sense had done. They were forced to the conclusion that though six hundred years had been spent in the prosecution and investigation of truth, truth itself had managed to elude their grasp, and was as far away from them as ever.

In the earlier part of the present book we shall have to consider of the manner in which the Europeans occupied themselves with the inquiry into the nature of God and of Being. We shall have to show that the sole criterion of truth they employed was one of authority; which authority was first that of the Holy Scriptures, but which was afterwards almost entirely superseded by that of the different

Councils. We shall have to relate how completely the teaching of Christ became paganised and perverted; and how in consequence there was a general decay of philosophy of any description, and little or nothing of Pantheistic doctrine. What little there was of Pantheism partook of the nature of theology, and had nothing to do with philosophy; but even of Pantheistic theology there was but a very small amount. How, indeed, could the Middle Age Christians be Pantheists, when they were Polytheists?—Polytheists, not in the vague, superficial, merely outward form of Neo-Platonism or the Vedas, but Polytheists in the fullest and most comprehensive sense of the word; Polytheists as much as the believers in the early Greek mythology were Polytheists. Nay, more so. For the Christians were much more earnest and sincere in the manner of their belief than were the Greeks.

We doubt whether the Greeks even cared enough for their religion to suffer or die for it. We think it quite open to question whether they were not more than half-conscious that their gods and goddesses were little more than poetical embodiments of their own fancy; whether even in their moments of greatest devotion they did not regard them with less than the reverence a subject pays his sovereign, less than the affection a patriot feels for his country. They were willing at times to persecute those who ventured to speak against their gods and goddesses, it is true. Yet these persecutions were of very unfrequent occurrence. Considering how many and diverse were the number of philosophical systems that were mooted, it is somewhat worthy of remark how few were the philosophers who received any persecution seriously worth the mention. The early Greeks were tolerant because for the most part they were indifferent.

The Christians, on the other hand, were intolerant; but they were most earnest, most sincere. With them there was no such thing as half-belief. They died, and were

tortured, and suffered imprisonment most willingly for their religion.[1] They sacrificed husband and wife, parents and children, or even their greatest benefactor, for the sake of their religion; often for the sake of the most incomprehensible and (to the minds of us who are living in the present day) utterly contemptible tenets of that religion.

The early Greeks may be compared to light-hearted children playing with balls made by themselves out of soap-bubbles; enchanted with the radiant colours and perfect proportion of the form, yet not caring very much if they fell to pieces—they could so easily blow fresh ones, which if possible should be even more perfect in form, more radiant in colour, than any of the preceding. Or, again, the believer in Greek mythology may be likened to a sunny, bright-haired little girl playing with a beautiful doll; nursing it, dressing it with pride and care, even in a measure loving it, yet all the time more than half-conscious that it was but a toy and not capable of sensation. A new game, a treat, the promise of a story or sugarplum will quickly make her forget it, leave it out in the cold, or neglect it for days. She would not thus treat a baby-brother, or sister; not even a pet canary or kitten would she treat in such manner.

[1] In fairness it must be admitted that if the Christians were cruelly persecuted, and bore their sufferings most nobly (which is undoubtedly the case), yet they themselves were by no means behindhand in returning such persecutions with double interest whensoever they had the power. Nay, they were not even content with punishing their adversaries in this world; they gloated over the idea of their sufferings in the next. 'How shall I admire, how laugh, how gloat, how exult,' exclaims the stern Tertullian, 'when I behold so many proud monarchs, so many fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians, so many dancers!' &c., &c.

Few illustrations could depict more strongly the strange manner in which the teaching of the sect will deviate from the teaching of its founder, than a comparison between the above quotation from Tertullian and the Sermon on the Mount by the Divine Author of Christianity.

But the believer in Christian polytheism may be likened to a hideous, haggard idiot woman nursing a bundle of filthy rags or dried sticks, pressing it to her withered breast, firmly believing it to be her child; loving it, caressing it, even depriving herself of her tattered cloak or shawl, in order to provide it with warmth.

We confess it has always appeared to us that those who sneer at the eccentricities and insanities of Mediæval Christianity must be not only very superficial but very callous. That period is too sad and wretched a period to be met with by mere scoffs and scorn. For ourselves we confess that after we have been perusing any accounts of the Christian Middle Ages, we feel nearly the same intense compassion we imagine we should feel if we were to be taken through the wards of a lunatic or idiot asylum: a deep, great pity for the sufferers themselves, and a sad wonder *why* such sufferings should be permitted.

In this chapter we shall have to dilate somewhat largely upon the depth of miserable degradation into which Christianity fell. We trust that by so doing we shall not unwittingly wound the consciences, or grate upon the feelings of any who may have taken the trouble to have gone thus far through our sketch. But it must be remembered that it is the Latin, paganised form of Christianity we are condemning, and not the doctrine and teaching of Christ. For such doctrine, as well as for the character of Christ, we have nothing but intense reverent admiration, and earnest, humble desire of imitation. For the most part, it is only in the shallow, superficial philosophy of an eighteenth century that there was found to be a voice presuming to question the beauty and virtue of the character of Christ. In the present century those in a much more advanced state of unbelief than ourselves have never seemed for a moment to question the purity of the character, the beauty of the teaching. Thus, Renan describes his feelings concerning Christ: "Before such a demigod as this we, in our feebleness, may

well fall down and worship.' So the author of 'Supernatural Religion' believes that, 'whatever may be the unlooked-for phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed.' So even Strauss confesses that in the character of Christ 'were found a charity, a sweetness, and an all-embracing love which have been as the germ out of which all that we now call humanity has been developed.' If such is the verdict of those who have principally occupied themselves in writing against Christianity, and who are self-acknowledged opponents of that faith, how much less likely is it that one like ourself, born and bred in the Christian faith, and the majority of whose relations for many generations have been clergymen of the Established Church of England—how much less likely is it, we say, that such a one should shake off all childish influences and hereditary characteristics to such a degree as to scorn and condemn that which every influence, whether inherited or educational, is prompting to grave and reverent admiration? It is not the teaching of Christ we are condemning, it is the paganised perversion of that teaching.

In the introductory chapter of this sketch we stated our belief that nearly the whole intellectual development of the world consisted in the rise and acceptation of some great religion, or system of philosophy, which was afterwards to undergo a process of paganisation or perversion. Of course, even in this process there would be saved some grains of wheat among the chaff, else there had been no such thing as progress or development in the whole world. But still, broadly speaking and in general terms, we may state that there had never been a grand religious or philosophical system mooted which did not display a wonderful capability of paganisation and perversion. Nay, we may even go further, and declare our belief that the purer and sublimer the religion or philosophy, the greater in all probability would be the depths of the degradation into which it would fall.

The doctrine embodied in the Vedas was a very pure and sublime religion; and we have seen how quickly it became perverted under the influences of Brahmanism. But the doctrine of Christ was far purer and far more sublime than was the doctrine of the Vedas. And the degradation of Latinised Christianity was (shall we say in consequence?) far greater, far deeper than the degradation of the Vedas effected by Brahmanism. There was nearly the same amount of sacerdotalism displayed in both forms of religious perversion. But Brahmanism was never guilty of the fearful cruelties and tortures perpetrated by the Christian Church. Foolish as were many of the Brahmanical ceremonies, they certainly never exceeded, even if they attained, such a pitch of insanity, or such an extent of intellectual frenzy as displayed by those of the Christian Church. It is all very well to plead as an excuse that commentators or ill-natured critics were apt to mistake the letter for the spirit, and to interpret what was in reality only intended for symbolism in its most literal form. It is all very well to plead as an excuse, for instance, that the Roman Catholic idols, images, pictures, were but symbols, and only intended to be understood allegorically. With the minority it might be so. But if history[1] be even in the faintest degree reliable we cannot doubt that with the majority these so-called 'symbols' were real veritable idols, demanding worship, and exacting homage and reverence. There were idols of winking Virgins; there were bleeding Virgins; there were Virgins who could weep. There were evil spirits and demons without number; and a supposed piece of the Saviour's Cross was employed as a fetich to exorcise demons or to prevent the assaults of evil spirits.

And yet, as we said before, we cannot sneer at or ridicule these absurdities. The perpetrators were too sincere,

[1] The prevalence of idol-worship, during the period when the power of Latinised Christianity was at its height, is powerfully described by Gibbon in the xxviii. chapter of his 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'

the times were too sad and earnest to be dismissed with a sarcasm. It appears to us these times have never been fairly treated. By Protestants they have been shown up in all their vilest and most exaggerated colours; by free-thinkers they have for the most part been either sneered or scoffed at, or else passed over with silent contempt. From us they elicit a profound compassion, an intense wonder at the strange contradictions of which human nature is capable. Take, for instance, the wonderful story of St. Simon Stylites (if it be a true one). We scarcely know which most evokes our astonishment: the marvellous heroism and powers of patient endurance displayed during thirty years of self-imposed torture, or the extraordinary intellectual and moral delusion into which the man must have fallen before he could really have persuaded himself that by such self-imposed miseries he was either serving his fellow-creatures or honouring his God. Had such a one lived in these days he would have gained no admiring disciples; he would instead have been placed under treatment for religious mania; and would very possibly by kind, judicious measures have been cured of his frenzy, and his natural characteristics of extreme conscientiousness and courage turned into some more beneficial channel, some more profitable direction. Any way he would have been prevented from outraging common sense, and unconsciously blaspheming his Creator, by exhibiting his devotion in such useless, futile self-tortures.

But in his day even the hypothesis of a physical cure for religious enthusiasm or mania would have been deemed rank heresy and atheism. How, indeed, was it possible for the studies of physiology or psychology to be prosecuted when a drop of consecrated water or a piece of wood that had been blessed were considered to be infallible remedies for nearly every disease under the sun? How could the principles of surgery or medicine be studied when each region of the body was supposed to be under some spiritual

charge; when the first joint of the right thumb was supposed to be under the care of God the Father, the second under that of the blessed Virgin, and so on of other parts? How was it likely that any physical or mundane alleviations should be sought for any of the numerous ills to which flesh is heir, when it was peremptorily commanded that if a man have sore eyes he must invoke St. Clara; if he have an inflammation elsewhere he must turn to St. Anthony; if he have an ague he must pray for the assistance of St. Pernel?[1] How, indeed, could physical alleviations of any sort or kind be procured, when prayer was considered to be the only justifiable means of arriving at and procuring such alleviation; when every attempt at self-improvement or self-help were considered to be signs of the want of a proper faith and trust in the mercy and power of God?

When we recall the terrible evils which resulted from this ignorance, when we remember the persecutions, tortures, and cruel deaths which were solely the produce of fanaticism and bigotry, we think it becomes a question whether, during the first fifteen hundred years after the birth of Christ, the evils occasioned by Christianity did not greatly outweigh the good. In our opinion we think the evils were greatly in excess of the good.[2] We say it with

[1] 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. ii. p. 122.

[2] 'It is a melancholy truth' (says Gibbon, in his 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,') 'that the Christians, in the course of their intestine dissensions, have inflicted far greater severities on each other than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels. During the ages of ignorance which followed the subversion of the Roman Empire in the West the bishops of the Imperial city extended their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin Church. The fabric of superstition which they had erected, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reason, was at length assaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who from the twelfth to the sixteenth century assumed the popular character of reformers. The Church of Rome defended by violence the Empire which she had acquired by fraud; a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by proscriptions, wars, massacres, and the institutions of the Holy Office. And as the reformers were animated by a love of civil as well as of religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own interest with that of the clergy, and enforced by fire and the sword the terrors of spiritual censures. In the Netherlands alone more than one hundred thousand of the

diffidence and hesitation, but we have very attentively read, and gravely weighed, the various accounts of the Middle Ages, written by men of different creeds and different opinions, and we have been forced to the conclusion that the evils effected by paganised Christianity were almost incalculable. We are not now alluding to the somewhat superficial and oft-repeated charges of the great immoralities practised by the majority of the Popes. That the Popes were for the most part fearfully, grossly immoral seems to be almost beyond doubt. But Christianity did not teach them to be immoral; she was not the cause of their immoralities, and should not therefore be considered responsible for them. It is true that the supposed infallibility and halo of sanctity cast around the Popes may very possibly have encouraged and have afforded a scope for their immoral practices. But still Christianity, even the worst form of paganised Christianity, did not teach them to be immoral; at the very outside and worst it only afforded them an opportunity for indulging in the vicious practices that were natural and innate in them. The papal sovereigns were immoral, not because they were popes, but because they happened to be singularly wicked, repulsive men; they would have been equally immoral had they been kings or emperors instead of popes. They were immoral Christians, it is but too true, but they were not immoral because they were Christians. They would have been equally immoral had they been Jews, or Mahometans, or Brahmans. The immorality of the Popes may be termed an accident of Christianity, but it was not a consequent.

But the ignorance (the evils of which we believe to have been so incalculable) was no accident. Unhappily it

subjects of Charles V. are said to have suffered by the hand of the executioner; and this extraordinary number is attested by Grotius, a man of genius and learning, who preserved his moderation amidst the fury of contending sects, and who composed the annals of his own age and country at a time when the invention of printing had facilitated the means of intelligence and increased the danger of detection.'

was a palpable consequent. It had nothing to do with the individual characters of different men; it had solely to do with the teaching and the doctrine of the Church. We see it displayed with as much distinctness and clearness in the preaching of men, of whose ability and earnestness we cannot for a moment doubt, as in the mere jargon or insincerity of the bigot or impostor. Thus, Eusebius says: 'It is not through ignorance of the things admired by philosophers, but through contempt of such useless labour, that we think so little of these matters, turning our souls to the exercise of better things.' Thus, Gregory the Great insisted on the maxim of 'Ignorance is the mother of devotion.' Thus, even St. Augustine (obviously one of the most learned and high-minded of the Fathers) asserted: 'It is impossible there should be inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, since no such race is recorded by Scripture among the descendants of Adam.' For the first four or five centuries the authority of the Holy Scriptures was considered entirely infallible; at which period, or indeed even before, it had been discovered that there were certain passages occurring in the sacred writings which contradicted one another, and from time to time, in consequence of these discrepancies, Councils were evoked and apparent reconciliations were effected. The first Œcumenical Council took place in 325 A.D.; the eighth in 870. In these five centuries what little intellect there was was entirely expended in trying to reconcile Scriptural discrepancies, or in endeavouring to determine what place in the Trinity should be occupied by the Saviour. For about a thousand years the authority of the Councils was considered very nearly as sacred as that of the Holy Scriptures themselves.

What was the state of the progress of the world during these twelve or fifteen hundred years? Absolutely *nil*. Not a single discovery was effected by any one of the Christians in astronomy, geography, geology, physics, chemistry, or medicine. All learning was denounced as

magic. Every manuscript that could be seized was burnt. The mystery of things above reason was pronounced to be the very cause why they should be accepted by faith. The few men who possessed any of the writings of the great Alexandrians destroyed them in terror, in case they should contain passages that would surely bring destruction upon themselves and their families. The unfortunate Hypatia was basely murdered, partly, no doubt, because she was an opponent of Christianity, but chiefly, because she occupied herself with explaining the principles of geometry, and imbued her disciples with a love of learning in general. Gregory the Great expelled from Rome all mathematical studies, and burned the Palatine Library, founded by Augustus Cæsar. He forbade the study of the classics, and hated even the relics of classical genius. He boasted that his own works were written without regard to the rules of grammar, and even censured a priest for venturing to teach such a subject. While the Jews and Mahometans were prosecuting the studies of medicine and surgery, the Christians looked upon the physician as little better than an atheist, and sought to cure themselves instead by resorting to shrines and relics. Later on, when certain diseases were found to be apparently incurable, it was believed that the sufferer had been bewitched. Incantations and charms were evoked in order to break the spell. The supposed witch was diligently sought for, and if discovered was made to undergo the trial by water: if she sinks she is innocent, if she swims she is guilty. Nay, so complete and sincere was the belief in witchcraft, that unhappy women would of themselves come forward, and confess that they were in league with the devil. Every heretic who confessed himself to be a heretic was burnt; every man under suspicion, who refused to acknowledge himself a heretic, was racked and tortured into confession.

What was the cause of such unheard-of barbarities and insanities? Not cruelty or wickedness, but ignorance.

That some few of the Papist priests were impostors, and wished to extract money for their supposed miraculous cures, we admit; but these were in the minority. Where there was one man willing to practise conscious imposition there were fifty prepared to be taken in by such imposition. Even in the barbarous practices of the Inquisition, although there was unhappily a large number of remorseless men willing to torture and murder for political interests and selfish ends, there was a still larger number who acted in such a way from purest motives of faith (which at that period would more properly be denominated ignorance). Unhappy Christians would denounce father, mother or brethren, thinking thereby they were but performing their duty to the priest who had so commanded them. They would fast, scourge themselves, torture themselves, deprive themselves of food and raiment without a complaint, if the priest had so commanded, only too proud and happy to think they should be deemed worthy of such renunciation. Or if, in spite of themselves, the voice of reason would make itself heard, it was peremptorily silenced, and believed to be the temptation of some devil.

Do the evils of this lamentable ignorance stop even here? We think not. We believe that even to this day we are feeling the effects of them. Through the influences of such ignorance the civilisation of Europe is but two or three centuries old. It might have been eighteen or nineteen centuries. We cannot say the times were not ripe for it. Descartes, Galileo, Harvey had to begin where the Alexandrian writers left off. There was over a thousand years of dead stagnation. As Dr. Draper well expresses it: 'Scarcely were the Asclepions closed, the schools of philosophy prohibited, the libraries dispersed or destroyed, learning branded as magic or punished as treason, philosophers driven into exile, and as a class exterminated, when it became apparent that a void had been created which it was incumbent on the victors to fill. Among the

great prelates who was there to stand in the place of those men whose achievements had glorified the human race? Who was to succeed to Archimedes, Hipparchus, Euclid, Herophilus, Eratosthenes? Who to Plato and Aristotle? The quackeries of miracle-cure, shrine-cure, relic-cure were destined to eclipse the genius of Hippocrates, and nearly two thousand years to intervene between Archimedes and Newton, nearly seventeen hundred between Hipparchus and Kepler. A dismal interval of almost twenty centuries parts Hero, whose first steam-engine revolved in the Serapion, from James Watt, who has revolutionised the industry of the world. What a fearful blank! Yet not a blank, for it had its products—hundreds of patristic folios filled with obsolete speculations, oppressing the shelves of antique libraries, enveloped in dust and awaiting the worm.'[1]

Said we not well that in Christian countries civilisation had remained at a dead-lock for fifteen centuries? Said we not well that the sole cause and origin of this dead-lock was the Christian denunciation of learning and worship of ignorance? Said we not well that even to this day we are still feeling the effects of it; for whereas our civilisation is but three centuries old, it might have been nearly nineteen? And yet in these three centuries how much has been accomplished, how much has been encompassed! Let Professor Huxley speak for us:—

'If the noble first President of the Royal Society could revisit the upper air and once more gladden his eyes with the sight of the familiar mace, he would find himself in the midst of a material civilisation more different from that of his day, than that of the seventeenth, was from the first century. And if Lord Brouncker's native sagacity had not deserted his ghost, he would need no long reflection to discern that all these great ships, these railways, these telegraphs, these factories, these printing presses, without which

[1] 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. i. p. 387.

the whole fabric of modern English society would collapse into a mass of stagnant and starving pauperism—that all these pillars of our State are but the ripples and the bubbles upon the surface of that great spiritual stream, the springs of which, only, he and his fellows were privileged to see, and seeing, to recognise as that which it behoved them above all things to keep pure and undefiled.

'It may not be too great a flight of imagination to conceive our noble *revenant* not forgetful of the great troubles of his own day, and anxious to know how often London had been burnt down since his time, and how often the plague had carried off its thousands. He would have to learn that, although London contains tenfold the inflammable matter that it did in 1666; though not content with filling our rooms with woodwork and light draperies, we must needs lead inflammable and explosive gases into every corner of our streets and houses, we never allow even a street to burn down. And if he asked how this had come about we should have to explain that the improvement of natural knowledge has furnished us with dozens of machines for throwing water upon fires, any one of which would have furnished the ingenious Mr. Hooke, the first Curator and experimenter of the Royal Society, with ample materials for discourse before half a dozen meetings of that body; and that, to say truth, except for the progress of natural knowledge, we should not have been able to make even the tools by which these machines are constructed. And, further, it would be necessary to add, that although severe fires sometimes occur and inflict great damage, the loss is very generally compensated by societies, the operations of which have been rendered only possible by the progress of natural knowledge in the direction of mathematics, and the accumulation of wealth in virtue of other natural knowledge.

'But the plague? My Lord Brouncker's observation would not, I fear, lead him to think that Englishmen of the nineteenth century are purer in life or more fervent in

religious faith than the generation which could produce a Boyle, an Evelyn and a Milton. He might find the mud of society at the bottom, instead of at the top, but I fear the sum-total would be as deserving of swift judgment as at the time of the Restoration. And it would be our duty to explain once more, and this time not without shame, that we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith, nor that of our morals, which keeps the plague from our city, but again that it is the improvement of our natural knowledge.

'We have learnt that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, unwatered streets, foul with accumulated garbage. Their houses must be ill-drained, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated. Their subjects must be ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed. The London of 1665 was such a city. The cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities. We, in later times, have learned somewhat of Nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge and of that fractional obedience, we have no plague; because that knowledge is still very imperfect, and that obedience yet incomplete, typhus is our companion and cholera our visitor. But it is not presumptuous to express the belief that when our knowledge is more complete, and our obedience the expression of our knowledge, London will count her centuries of freedom from typhus and cholera, as she now counts and gratefully reckons her two hundred years of ignorance of that plague which swooped upon her thrice in the first half of the seventeenth century. . . . .

'Granting for a moment, then, the truth of that which the depreciators of natural knowledge are so fond of urging, that its improvement can only add to the resources of our material civilisation; admitting it to be possible that the founders of the Royal Society themselves looked for no

other reward than this, I cannot confess that I was guilty of exaggeration when I hinted, that to him who had the gift of distinguishing between prominent events and important events, the origin of a combined effort on the part of mankind to improve natural knowledge might have loomed larger than the plague, and have outshone the glare of the Fire, as a something fraught with a wealth of beneficence to mankind, in comparison with which the damage done by those ghastly evils would shrink into insignificance.

'It is very certain that for every victim slain by the plague, hundreds of mankind exist and find a fair share of happiness in the world by the aid of the spinning-jenny. And the great fire, at its worst, could not have burned the supply of coal, the daily working of which, in the bowels of the earth, made possible by the steam-pump, gives rise to an amount of wealth to which the millions lost in Old London are but as an old song.

'But spinning-jenny and steam-pump are, after all, but toys, possessing an accidental value; and natural knowledge creates multitudes of more subtle contrivances, the praises of which do not happen to be sung because they are not directly convertible into instruments for creating wealth. . . . . According to [some men] the improvement of natural knowledge has been, and always must be, synonymous with no more than the improvement of the material resources and the increase of the gratifications of men. . . .

'If such were true, I, for one, should not greatly care to toil in the service of natural knowledge. I think I would just as soon be quietly chipping my own flint axe, after the manner of my forefathers a few thousand years back, as be troubled with the endless malady of thought which now infests us all, for such reward. But I venture to say that such views are contrary alike to reason and to fact. Those who discourse in such fashion seem to me to be so intent upon trying to see what is above Nature, or what is behind her, that they are blind to what stares them in the face in her.

'I should not venture to speak thus strongly if my justification were not to be found in the simplest and most obvious facts—if it needed more than an appeal to the most notorious truths to justify my assertion, that the improvement of natural knowledge, whatever direction it has taken, and however low the aims of those who may have commenced it, has not only conferred practical benefits on men, but in so doing has effected a revolution in their conceptions of the universe and of themselves, and has profoundly altered their modes of thinking and their views of right and wrong. I say that natural knowledge, seeking to satisfy natural wants, has found the ideas which can alone still spiritual cravings. I say that natural knowledge, in desiring to ascertain the laws of comfort, has been driven to discover those of conduct, and to lay the foundation of a new morality. . . . .

'For example, what could seem wiser, from a mere material point of view, more innocent, from a theological one, to an ancient people than that they should learn the exact succession of the seasons, as warnings for their husbandmen; or the position of the stars, as guides to their rude navigators? But what has grown out of this search for natural knowledge of so merely useful a character? You all know the reply. Astronomy—which of all sciences has filled men's minds with general ideas of a character most foreign to their daily experience, and has, more than any other, rendered it impossible for them to accept the beliefs of their fathers. Astronomy—which tells them that this so vast and seemingly solid earth is but an atom among atoms, whirling, no man knows whither, through illimitable space; which demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heaven above us, is but that space, filled by an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the wave of an angry sea; which opens up to us infinite regions where nothing is known, or even seems to have been known, but matter and force,

operating according to rigid rules; which leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conceptions of time, infinitely remote, and that the end is as immeasurably distant. . . . .

'And if the astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space and the practical eternity of the duration of the universe; if the physical and chemical philosophers have demonstrated the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts, and the practical eternity of matter and of force; and if both alike have proclaimed the universality of a definite and predicable order and succession of events, the workers in biology have not only accepted all these, but have added more startling theses of their own. For, as the astronomers discover in the earth no centre of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalists find man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the astronomer observes the mark of practically endless time set upon the arrangements of the solar system, so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages, which, in relation to human experience, are infinite. . . . .

'Such are a few of the new conceptions implanted in our minds by the improvement of natural knowledge. Men have acquired the ideas of the practically infinite extent of the universe and of its practical eternity; they are familiar with the conception that our earth is but an infinitesimal fragment of that part of the universe which can be seen; and that, nevertheless, its duration is, as compared with our standard of time, infinite. They have further acquired the idea that man is but one of innumerable forms of life now existing in the globe, and that the present existences are but the last of an immeasurable series of predecessors. Moreover, every step they have

made in natural knowledge has tended to extend and rivet in their minds the conception of a definite order of the universe—which is embodied in what are called, by an unhappy metaphor, the laws of Nature—and to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order itself. . . .

'No one can deny that these ideas exist, and have been the inevitable outgrowth of the improvement of natural knowledge. And if so, it cannot be doubted that they are changing the form of men's most cherished and most important convictions.'[1]

All these wonderful changes and improvements, then, both physical and mental, have been effected in little more than two short centuries! We may be grateful indeed that our lot has been cast in such a century as the present. Yet even our gratitude will not prevent the thought from forcibly obtruding itself: how much better off, how much happier might we have been, had the miseries of the whole fifteen hundred years of Catholic organisation never occurred! Instead of two centuries of civilisation we might then have reaped the products of eighteen. For although, as Professor Huxley remarked, we have managed through the improvement of our natural knowledge totally to banish the plague from our shores, we are still unhappily too frequently visited with typhus and cholera; though our knowledge of Nature's laws is considerably less imperfect than it was, it is still so very far from being perfect that we are daily surrounded with calamities and miseries which are wholly the result of ignorance and want of forethought.

Nay, what is crime itself but ignorance in its worst and basest form? Professor Huxley has told us that to our shame the only qualities in which the nineteenth century

[1] 'On the advisableness of improving natural knowledge,' from 'Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews,' by T. H. Huxley.

does not show a wonderful and marked improvement upon the sixteenth, are in those of morality and virtue. What is the reason of this? I believe it may be almost entirely traced to the fact that those three sciences, which have the most to do with the human race, are yet in a more backward state than any of the others. Physiology and Biology are still in their youth; Political Economy in its childhood; Sociology (that science, which of all others, promises to be the most beneficial to humanity) is in its merest infancy. It has taken nearly three centuries of English civilisation to produce a Herbert Spencer. Had it not been for the Catholic stagnation, Herbert Spencer might still have taken three centuries for development, and his philosophy yet have been nearly fifteen hundred years old. It is no Utopian dream to try and imagine in what blessed state we might now be in, if we could blot out the evils of that long period of utter stagnation and wasted opportunities. We have but to multiply all the wonderful improvements of the last three centuries by six, and we might get some definite idea of our freedom from misery and sickness. So many diseases have shown themselves capable of cure, for every poison there seems to be an antidote, that it is but reasonable to suppose that such diseases, as still baffle us, arise from our ignorance of the true remedies, and not because the diseases themselves are irremediable. Where is the cure for consumption, for cancer, for hydrophobia? Not yet found—not likely to be yet found; and yet we may be tolerably sure that had European civilisation steadily progressed from the time of the Alexandrian *savans* up to the present period, we should not now be tortured and racked by those horrible diseases. It is no fault of the doctrine of Christ that this dead-lock calamity has happened. That teaching is as valuable in these days as it was in his own. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' is a maxim good for all ages. 'All things whatsoever ye would have men do unto you, even so do ye unto them,' is a command as valu-

able in these days as ever it was in the days of Christ. But where Christ gives the true and simple injunctions of love and charity, science steps in and shows us that before we can be loving or be charitable we must know in what true love and charity consist. Science does not contradict the teaching of Christ; it only assists us greatly in the means of following it out.

The doctrine of Christ, then, is not responsible for these many hundred years of misery, persecution, ignorance, and bigotry. The Catholic organisation is solely responsible for it; and yet, as we have said, we do not look upon the Church as the conscious imposition so many free-thinkers have supposed her to be. Her one great error—an error she shares in common with other churches—was setting up one standard of authority to be upheld for all time as absolutely infallible. The miseries consequent upon an error like this are almost incalculable; whether that authority be a human authority, as in the person of the Pope, or a literary authority, as (I say it with all reverence) that of the sacred writings, it equally tends to retard, if not absolutely to stamp out, the progress of the human race. Galileo was tortured, Bruno burnt, for propounding doctrines which by virtue of their own truth have gradually forced their way to an acceptance which is now universal and unhesitating. Their persecutions did not arise from any immorality supposed to be in their doctrines, but solely and entirely because their theories did not find any verification in the Bible. That stagnant time was a sad, dreary period; yet, though we may regret it, let us not condemn it. If its sins are being visited on the fourth or fifth, perhaps even to the fortieth or fiftieth generations, they were still more bitterly visited on the period itself. Well has it been called the Dark Age, for verily it was seldom brightened with even a glimmering of light.

As we have said, during all these centuries we shall meet with very little of Pantheism in any form. Such spe-

culations as were timidly ventured to be put forward about the nature of God consisted principally in defining the exact position occupied by each person in the Trinity. But even such speculations as these met with an unfortunate share of persecution. As Arius says, 'I am persecuted because I have suggested that in the nature of things the Father must have had a longer beginning in time than the Son!'

Truly if Reason had resented her overthrow by Faith she was bitterly avenged. Truly she might declare, with a sort of sad triumph: 'You have thrown off my yoke, you were dissatisfied with my teaching, because I told you that not only could I myself not solve your inquiries about Cause and Essence, but that those inquiries were incapable of being solved by any answer. You disbelieved my warnings, and what has been the consequence? I at least made you humble and meek, tolerant towards the faults and errors of others, knowing how easily misled you have been yourselves. In every other of your yearnings after knowledge I would have assisted you to the utmost, and if I could have been of no service to you I would have candidly told you so. For at least I am no deceiver. I never pretend to do that of which I know I am incapable. But you have thrown me off, and you have thereby retarded your hopes of knowledge by fully a thousand years. Tolerance and mercy you have displaced by bigotry and cruelty, honest doubt by pretended infallibility. You have set up a standard for yourself, and by that self-same standard you will be crushed out of civilisation, almost out of humanity, unless I, your discarded sovereign, Reason, take pity on you, bury my resentment for ever in the past, and, coming to your assistance, prevent you for ever being crushed out by that same standard of authority self-raised by yourselves.'

With the exception of the Neo-Platonists, the first eight centuries were *almost* entirely devoid of Pantheistic

doctrine. We should have said *entirely* devoid, had it not been for certain passages in the writings of one of the greatest of the Fathers, St. Augustine, which passages will occupy us during the remainder of the chapter. St. Augustine, whose life is one of exceeding interest (quite apart from the purposes of this book), passed through many stages in the course of his eventful life, beginning from the stage of immorality and debauchery to the next stage of remorse and repentance—to another of yearning for some knowledge of good and of the nature of God and of being ; to a fourth, which may be called his Pantheistic stage, of believing that God and Nature were almost identical ; to a fifth, of being a Christian, in the purest and highest sense of that word ; to a sixth, that of being a bishop, with possibly some few of the faults of pride and bigotry, almost inevitable to a great ecclesiastic living in that age. But still, taking the life and character of St. Augustine in their full completeness, we must pronounce the life to have been one of singular interest, the character to have been of great fervour and earnestness.

Having passed through a course of debauchery and sin, he was possibly more alive to the real vileness of sin than one who has led a purer and better life. He loathed it, shrunk even from the remembrance of it. Yet he longed to know whence it came. The difficulty of this origin of evil was that difficulty which prevented him for some time from accepting the Christian faith, as it prevented him also from ever becoming wholly and entirely Pantheistic in his doctrine.

The difficulty he found in reconciling the Christian faith with the existence of evil may be seen from the following extract from his Confessions :—

'Because a piety, such as it was, constrained me to believe that the good God never created any evil nature, I conceived two masses, contrary to one another, both unbounded, but the evil narrower, the good more expansive.

And from this pestilent beginning the other sacrilegious conceits followed on me. For when my mind endeavoured to recur to the Catholic faith, I was driven back, since that was not the Catholic faith which I thought so. And I seemed to myself more reverential, if I believed of Thee, my God, as unbounded, at least on other sides, although on that side where the mass of evil was opposed to Thee, I was constrained to confess Thee bounded, than if on all sides I should imagine Thee to be bounded by the form of a human body. And it seemed to me better to believe Thee to have created no evil than to believe the nature of evil came from Thee. Yea, and our Saviour Himself, Thy Only Begotten, I believed to have been reached forth as it were for our salvation, out of the mass of Thy most lucid substance, so as to believe nothing of Him but what I could imagine in my vanity. His nature, then, being such, I thought, could not be born of the Virgin Mary without being mingled with the flesh; and how that which I had so figured to myself could be mingled, and not defiled, I saw not.'

His Pantheistical stage is very well shown in the seventh book of the Confessions:—

'I, a man, and such a man, sought to conceive of Thee, the sovereign, only, true God; and I did in my inmost soul believe that Thou wert incorruptible, and uninjurable, and unchangeable; because, though not knowing whence or how, yet I saw plainly and was sure, that that which may be corrupted, must be inferior to that which cannot; what could not be injured I preferred unhesitatingly to what could receive injury; the unchangeable to things subject to change. My heart passionately cried out against all my phantoms, and with this one blow I sought to beat away from the eye of my mind all that unclean troop which buzzed around it. And lo, being scarce put off, in the twinkling of an eye they gathered again thick about me, flew against my face and beclouded it, so that though not under the form of the human body, yet was I constrained to conceive of Thee as

being in space, whether infused into the world or diffused infinitely without it. Because whatsoever I conceived, deprived of this space, seemed to me nothing, yea, altogether nothing, not even a void, as if a body were taken out of its place, and the place should remain empty of any body at all, of earth and water, air and heaven, yet it would remain a void place, as it were a spacious nothing.

'I then, being thus gross-hearted, not clear even to myself, whatsoever was not extended over certain spaces, nor diffused, nor condensed, nor swelled out, or did not or could not receive some of these dimensions, I thought to be all together nothing. For over such forms as my eyes are wont to range, did my heart then range; nor yet did I see that this same notion of the mind, whereby I formed those very images, was not of this sort, and yet it could not have formed them had not itself been some great thing. *So also did I endeavour to conceive of Thee, Life of my life, as vast, through infinite spaces, on every side penetrating the whole mass of the universe, and beyond it every way, through immeasurable boundless spaces; so that the earth should have Thee, the heaven have Thee, all things have Thee and they be bounded in Thee, and Thou bounded nowhere. For that as the body of this air which is above the earth, hindereth not the light of the sun from passing through it, penetrating it, not by bursting or by cutting, but by filling it wholly, so I thought the body, not of heaven, air, and sea only, but of the earth too, pervious to Thee; so that in all its parts, the greatest as the smallest, it should admit Thy presence, by a secret inspiration, within and without, directing all things which Thou hast created.*'

We do not know any better description of Pantheism or any finer conception of the omnipresence of God than that contained in these few lines above which we have marked in italics. In our day such a description would be very fine, in his day it was singularly so. The only thing at all resembling it in any of the writings of his contempo-

raries was in those of the Neo-Platonists. Yet none of the Neo-Platonists ever attained the same purity of conception as evinced in these lines of St. Augustine. Nevertheless, this conception did not wholly satisfy St. Augustine himself. He thought that by such means every object would only be filled with God in degree, and according to size, the sparrow having a smaller proportion than the elephant, which would be unfairness.

Moreover, the question of Evil still absorbed him, and he could not understand how evil could be pervaded with God (which, indeed, is the strongest argument that can be brought against Pantheism).

'But again I said, Who made me? Did not my God, who is not only good, but goodness itself? Whence, then, came I to will evil and nill good, so that I am thus justly punished? Who set this in me, and ingrafted into me this plant of bitterness, seeing that I was most wholly formed by my most sweet God? If the devil were the author, whence is that same devil? And if he also by his own perverse will, of a good angel became a devil, whence, again, came in him that evil will whereby he became a devil, seeing the whole nature of angels was made by that most good Creator?' [1]

These are pregnant, heart-stirring questions; questions which we imagine must have arisen in every thoughtful mind. It is no part of our treatise to pursue the history of St. Augustine further. He found an answer to all his inquiries, a solution of all his difficulties, in the bosom of the Catholic Church. Whether such a solution can be really there found; whether, indeed, a true solution of this mystery of Evil will ever be found in any church or any system of philosophy, is a question upon which we will refrain from giving an opinion.

[1] These extracts have been selected from numerous extracts of the Confessions given by Mr. Maurice in his 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,' who in his turn has taken them, as he tells us, from the translation in the Oxford Library of the Fathers.

CHAPTER II.

DIGRESSION CONTINUED.—RISE OF SCHOLASTICISM.

IT was from the East that the West had received her first crude notions of science and philosophy. It was to be through the influence of the East that she was indirectly to receive her first faint ideas of self-deliverance from the Dark Ages of misery and degradation.

In the spring of the year 569 A.D. was born at Mecca, a man who by some has been branded with the names of impostor and blasphemer, who by others has been honoured with the name of Apostle and Prophet of God. The name of this man was Mahomet.

There are many miraculous stories told about his birth, and during the period of his infancy, with which, however, we need not occupy ourselves. Divested of their fabulous adjuncts they merely tend to show that Mahomet was possessed of an intelligence far beyond his years. And as he grew to boyhood the spirit of inquiry was quickened within him by intercourse with pilgrims from all parts of Arabia. His uncle, Abu Taleb, too (besides his sacerdotal character as guardian of the Caaba), was one of the most enterprising merchants of the tribe of Koreish, and had much to do with those caravans which thronged the gates of Mecca and filled its streets with pleasing tumult. The arrival and departure of these caravans were exciting events to a youth like Mahomet, and carried his imagination to foreign parts. He could not repress the ardent curiosity thus aroused; and once, when his uncle was about to mount

his camel, and depart with the caravan for Syria, he clung to him, and entreated to be permitted to accompany him. 'For who, oh, my uncle,' said he, 'will take care of me when thou art away?'

The appeal was not lost upon his kind-hearted uncle, who remembered, also, that the youth was nearly of an age to enter upon the active scenes of Arab life, and of a capacity to render essential service in the duties of the caravan; he readily, therefore, granted his prayer and took him with him on his journey to Syria.

The route lay through regions fertile in fables and traditions, which it is the delight of the Arabs to recount in the evening halts of the caravan. The vast solitudes of the desert, in which that wandering people pass so much of their lives, are prone to engender superstitious fancies; they have accordingly peopled them with good and evil genii, and clothed them with tales of enchantment commingled with wonderful events which happened in days of old. In these evening halts of the caravan, the youthful mind of Mahomet doubtless imbibed many of those superstitions of the desert which afterwards dwelt in his memory and powerfully influenced his imagination. We especially note two traditions, which he most probably heard at this time, and which were afterwards recorded by him in the Koran. One related to the mountainous district of Hedjar. Here, as the caravan wound its way through silent and deserted valleys, caves were pointed out in the sides of the mountains once inhabited by the children of Thamud, one of the 'lost tribes' of Arabia, and this was the tradition concerning them:—They were a proud and gigantic race, existing before the time of the patriarch Abraham. Having fallen into blind idolatry, God sent a prophet of the name of Saleh to restore them to the right way. They refused, however, to listen to him, unless he should prove the divinity of his mission by causing a camel, great with young, to issue from the entrails of a mountain. Saleh accordingly prayed, and

lo! a rock opened, and a female camel came forth, which soon produced a foal. Some of the Thamudites were convinced by the miracle, and were converted by the prophet from their idolatry; the greater part, however, remained in unbelief. Saleh left the camel among them as a sign, warning them that a judgment from heaven would fall on them should they do her any harm. For a time the camel was suffered to feed quietly in their pastures, going forth in the morning and returning in the evening. It is true that when she bowed her head to drink from a brook or well, she never raised it until she had drained the last drop of water; but then in return she yielded enough milk to supply the whole tribe. As, however, she frightened the other camels from the pasture, she became an object of offence to the Thamudites, who hamstrung and slew her. Upon this there was a fearful cry from heaven, and great claps of thunder, and in the morning all the offenders were found lying on their faces, dead. Thus the whole race was swept from the earth, and their country was laid for ever after under the ban of heaven.

This story made a powerful impression on the mind of Mahomet, inasmuch that, in after-years, he refused to let his people encamp in the neighbourhood, but hurried them away from it as an accursed region.

Another tradition, gathered on this journey, related to the city of Eyla, situated near the Red Rea. This place, he was told, had been inhabited in old times by a tribe of Jews, who lapsed into idolatry and profaned the Sabbath, by fishing on that sacred day; whereupon the old men were transformed into swine and the young men into monkeys.

We have noted these two traditions especially because they are both cited by Mahomet as instances of divine judgment on the crime of idolatry, and evince the bias his youthful mind was already taking on that important subject.

After skirting the ancient domains of the Moabites and

Ammonites, the caravan arrived at Bosra, or Bostra, beyond Syria. In Scripture days it had been a city of the Levites, but now was inhabited by Nestorian Christians. It was a great mart, annually visited by the caravans; and here our wayfarers came to a halt, and encamped near a convent of Nestorian monks.

By this fraternity Mahomet and his uncle were entertained with great hospitality. One of the monks on conversing with Mahomet was surprised at the precocity of his intellect, and interested by his eager desire for information, which appears to have had reference principally to matters of religion. They had frequent conversations together on such subjects, in the course of which the efforts of the monk were in all probability mainly directed against that idolatry in which the youthful Mahomet had been educated; for the Nestorian Christians were strenuous in condemning, not merely the worship of images, but even the casual exhibition of them; indeed, so far did they carry their scruples on this point that even the Cross, that general emblem of Christianity, was in a great degree included in this prohibition.

Many have ascribed that knowledge of the principles and traditions of the Christian faith displayed by Mahomet in after-life to those early conversations with this monk; it is probable, however, that he had further intercourse with the latter in the course of subsequent visits which he made to Syria.

Mahomet returned to Mecca, his imagination teeming with the wild tales and traditions picked up in the desert, and his mind deeply impressed with the doctrines imparted to him in the Nestorian convent. He seems ever afterwards to have entertained a mysterious reverence for Syria, probably from the religious impressions he had received there. It was the land whither Abraham the patriarch had repaired from Chaldea, taking with him the primitive worship of the one true God.

I have taken the above sketch of the early life of Mahomet from Mr. Washington Irving's 'History of the Life of Mahomet.' He has not given many references as to the authorities he has consulted; but the anecdotes and legends all seem to corroborate what appears to have been undoubtedly the strong characteristic of Mahomet, namely, an intense hatred and abomination of idols and idolatry. His theology was simple. He found his nation sunk in idolatry and fetish-worship, and he declared to them his whole teaching lay in the simple dogma, 'There is but one God.' To this declaration he afterwards added, 'And Mohammed is his prophet.' For a long time he showed no enmity to the Christians; nay, if all Christians had been as the Nestorian monks, it is, we think, probable that Mahomet himself might have embraced Christianity; for he always seemed to regard the character of Christ with reverence and admiration. But his mission being, as he conceived it, the denunciation and destruction of idolatry, his preconceived liking for Christianity met with a sudden revulsion when he came to be really acquainted with the polytheistic practices of the Christians. In the first place, he could not understand the metaphysical ideas contained in the Trinity, of which he was unable to conceive any other notion than that of three distinct Gods. Then there was the worship of the Virgin Mary, and adoration of numerous relics, all of which made him regard the Christians as being very little less idolatrous than were his own countrymen, before he had converted them from their heathen practices. The Koran is full of such rebukes: 'Verily, Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Apostle of God.' 'Believe, therefore, in God and his Apostles, and say not that there are three Gods; it will be better for you. God is but one God.' He disdained all metaphysical speculations upon the nature of God, or the origin of the universe. He saw no especial virtue in virginity, carrying his notions of the reasonableness of marriage to a degree somewhat incompatible with what

in this country, and in these days, we should consider the most ordinary dictates of morality. This seems to us, however, the only weak point in his whole system. Sensuality, unfortunately, formed a large part in the Mohammedan doctrine. The permission of a plurality of wives in this world, the reward of a gratification of sensuality in the next, are doctrines unhappily but too prominent in the Mohammedan system. The purity of Christ's doctrine stands out, on this wise, in striking relief to the licentiousness of the doctrine of Mahomet. But in charity, almsgiving, kindness, the doctrines of Christ and Mahomet so much resembled each other, that it is not impossible Mahomet may have purposely imitated the teaching of Christ, and engrafted it upon his own system. The Koran is far more occupied with the denunciation of polytheism than are the four gospels; which is not difficult to understand when we remember that Christ chiefly preached to the Jews, who were a monotheistic people; but that Mahomet preached to his polytheistic countrymen, or else to the almost equally polytheistic Christians. He never seems to have regarded the Jews with any dislike; nor did he treat them with the contempt he bestowed upon the believers of all other alien religions, which may be probably accounted for by remembering that the Jews were almost the only people in the world who were strict monotheists.

Mahomet declared war shortly before his death against the Roman Empire, and at the head of 30,000 men advanced towards Damascus. But his purpose was frustrated by ill-health. After his death, however, the spread and success of Mohammedanism were almost marvellous. It might have been merely due to the influence of the sword. It might have been that men were getting tired of the absurd distinctions and quarrels of sects calling themselves Arian, Trinitarian, Monothelites, Monophisites, Mariolatrists, and were glad to accept a doctrine so easy of comprehension as that contained in the war-cry of the assailants:

'There is but one God.' Whatever were the cause, the result was indisputable. From its most glorious seats Christianity was victoriously expelled by the Mahometans. From Palestine, the scene of its most sacred recollections; from Asia Minor, that of its first churches; from Egypt, whence issued the great doctrine of Trinitarian orthodoxy; from Carthage, who imposed her belief on Europe.[1]

Although, in the first flush of conquest, the Arabs had shown nearly as much fanaticism as had been displayed by the Christians; for they had laid hold of all the ancient vehicles of learning, even to burning, as some declared, the Alexandrian Library, still, from their subsequent conduct, it is evident the motive for such unhappy destruction was not worship of ignorance, but the mere lust of robbery and devastation that seems almost inseparable from great battles. But as soon as the first flush of victory was passed they devoted themselves to the attainment of knowledge, and became distinguished patrons of learning. Mahomet's son-in-law Ali was almost enthusiastic in his ardour for study. 'Eminence in science is the highest of honours,' he says; and again he declares, 'He dies not who gives life to learning.' 'The greatest ornament of a man is erudition.'

Although, as we have said, the Nestorians and Jews did not become actual believers in Mahomet, they yet regarded each other with tolerable feelings of amity. The Jews had long produced distinguished physicians; and the Mahometans and Nestorians were now determined to coalesce with them in their study of surgery and medicine, trusting that by thus imitating their example they might succeed in producing as fortunate a result. While the Christians were denunciating all human learning as vanity, the Mahometans were zealous in their prosecution of it; while the Christians were speculating upon the particular place in the Trinity, which should be assigned to each of the Three

[1] See page 232 of first volume of 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' by Dr. Draper.

Persons, the Jews and Mahometans were ardently pursuing the studies of physiology and medicine, acquainting themselves with the laws of health, and the prevention and cure of disease.

The first Christian writer after the time of Augustine who has any claim upon our attention is Johannes Scotus Erigena, the metaphysician of the ninth century—in the opinion of Mr. Maurice one of the acutest metaphysicians of any century. By some he has been considered the founder of the Scholastic Philosophy. It is said that in the year 825 A.D. he made a pilgrimage to the birthplace of Plato and Aristotle, and that this pilgrimage led him to indulge in the hope of uniting philosophy once more with religion, in the manner proposed by the ecclesiastics who were studying in Spain.

About the period of his birth the Christian world had (in addition to the complicating questions concerning the Trinity) been agitating itself with the doctrines of transubstantiation and predestination; but, though Erigena seems to have controverted the former doctrine, for the most part his pantheistic, metaphysical, and somewhat overrefined doctrines do not seem to have been considered by him incompatible with the ordinary teaching of the Church. His views had a decided resemblance to those of the Neo-Platonists. Like them he had a strong leaning to the mystical notions of a Trinity (quite apart, or rather, in his case, in addition to the ordinary Christian orthodox conception of it). Erigena's notion of a Trinity was that of a threefold motion or rotation of man about the Divine Centre. The first or inmost circle is that described by the Nous, which he renders Intellectus, Animus, or Mens. This recognises God as the Principle of its attraction, the source of its light, but enters into no thought or conception respecting Him, confessing Him as the Absolute and Incomprehensible. The second is that of the Reason or Virtue, which acknowledges God as the primary cause of the things

which are, and which takes account of those primordial causes or ideas which are implied in His creatures and in all His operations. The third motion is that of the senses, which takes notice of all distinct operations and enters into them.[1] Thus, in the opinion of Erigena, neither the intellect, nor senses, nor characteristics of man can be looked upon as independent from their centre. From God they have been derived; about Him they revolve; into Him they will return. A doctrine like this is evidently verging on the Oriental conceptions of emanation and absorption. The Divine Nature, in his opinion, is the cause of all things, 'seeing that from that cause the whole circle of things which, after it, are created from it, diffuses itself into genera and species, and numbers and differences, and whatever other distinctions there are in Nature, with a certain wonderful and divine multiplication. But seeing that to that same cause all things which proceed from it, when they shall come to their end, will return, therefore it is called the end of all things, and is said neither to create or be created; for after all things have returned into it, nothing further will proceed from it by generation in place and time, in kinds and forms, since all will be quiet in it, and will remain an unchanged and undivided one.'

'God, therefore, in Himself is Love,' he says, 'in Himself is Vision, in Himself is Motion, and nevertheless He is neither Motion, nor Vision, nor Love, but more than Love, more than Motion, more than Vision. And He is in Himself Loving, Seeing, Moving; yet He is not in Himself Loving, Seeing, Moving, because He is more than Loving, Seeing, Moving. Further, He is in Himself to be Loved, to be Seen, to be Moved; and yet He is not in Himself to be Seen, or Moved, or Loved, because He is more than that.'

To our idea we confess the worthy Erigena is somewhat

[1] In the above account of the doctrine of Erigena I have for the most part availed myself of the translation as given in Mr. Maurice's 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy.'

perplexing in his endeavours at exactitude. But still the great virtue in Erigena, the one point in him that more than atones for his obscurities and confusion, is that he was the first for many centuries to see that though Reason was not very trustworthy, she was yet far more trustworthy than Authority. The chief work of Johannes is called 'On the Division of Nature.' It is supposed to be a dialogue between a master and disciple; and in the first book of this treatise, his ideas upon the importance of Reason as a guide in life are very clearly explained.

'Thou art not ignorant,' says the master, 'that I think that which is first in Nature is of greater dignity than that which is first in Time.'

Disciple. 'This is known almost to all.'

Master. 'We have learnt further that Reason is first in Nature, but Authority in time. For, although Nature was created together with Time, Authority did not begin to exist from the beginning of Time and Nature. But Reason has arisen together with Nature and Time from the beginning of things.'

Disciple. 'Reason itself teaches this. For Authority, no doubt, hath proceeded from true Reason, but Reason not by any means from Authority. And all Authority, which is not approved by true Reason, turns out to be weak. But true Reason, seeing that it stands out firm and immutable, protected by its own virtues, needs not to be strengthened by any confirmations of Authority. True Authority, indeed, as it seems to me, is nothing else but Truth united by the powers of Reason, and transmitted in letters by the holy Fathers for the benefit of posterity. Perhaps, however, you do not agree with me.'

Master. 'Entirely. Therefore, in the subject which is now before us, let us resort, first to Reason, and then to Authority.'

Such a passage as this, in a time when Authority was everything, and every prompting or assertion of Reason

was regarded as a temptation from the Devil requiring instant and stern suppression, appears, indeed, like a bright solitary oasis amongst dreary tracks of waste and wilderness.

Meanwhile we must retrace our steps a little, and remember that early in the eighth century the Arabs had conquered Spain, and thus lifted at least one portion of Europe out of the slough of ignorance and barbarity. For scarcely had the Arabs settled in Spain than they commenced a complete process of civilisation and improvement, devoting themselves to the culture of mind as well as of body. While the unhappy Christians were religiously bent upon torturing the body, and allowing it to become absolutely diseased from want of ablutions and clean linen, the Spanish Arabs were, from equally religious and earnest motives, cleanly upon principle; and instead of torturing the body, devoted themselves to the endeavour to heal and alleviate such diseases as could not be prevented. To every mosque was attached a public school, in which the children of the poor were instructed how to read and write, and informed of the chief principles inculcated in the Koran. In Cordova, Granada, and other cities there were universities frequently under the superintendence of the Jews; the Mohammedan maxim being that the real learning of a man is of more importance to the public in general than the particular religious opinions he may hold.[1] Every science, as well as every history and system of philosophy, was diligently studied, although the science of

[1] 'Be not ignorant,' says Abulpharagius, one of the Arabian scholars, 'that those are the elect of God, those are His best and most useful servants, whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties. The mean ambition of the Chinese may glory in the industry of their hands; that of the Turks in the indulgence of their brutal appetites. Yet these dexterous artists must view, with hopeless emulation, the hexagons and pyramids of the cells of a beehive: those fortitudinous heroes are awed by the superior fierceness of the lions and tigers; and in their amorous enjoyments they are much inferior to the vigour of the grossest and most sordid quadrupeds. The teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of a world, which, without their aid, would again sink in ignorance and barbarism.'

medicine seems to have been assigned the most prominent place in the Arab system of learning.

Turn from the tenth century as it was in Mohammedan Spain, to the tenth century as it was in Christian Italy, and we should be hardly guilty of an exaggeration if we were to describe it as the difference between Elysium and Pandemonium. For of all the centuries of vice and ignorance that had gone before, there was not one which equalled the tenth century in horrible crimes of almost unimaginable barbarity. As we have said before, Christianity, not even paganised Christianity, must be considered wholly responsible for all the vices and abominations of the then Christian world. Indirectly, indeed, she may be considered partially responsible, for she had persistingly inculcated a prohibition of knowledge and learning; and when the mind is suffocated with ignorance it takes but little time for it to be altogether extinguished with vice, and lose itself completely in the mastery of animal desires and animal propensities. It was an age of utter degradation. Nobles, kings, and popes were sunk in vices that could scarcely be written. Vile as were the nobles and princes, they were yet exceeded in vileness by the practices of the Popes, who, indeed, for many generations had been gradually becoming more and more debased in their habits of debauchery and tyranny. John the Twelfth had cut off the nose and tongue of John the Cardinal. Boniface had strangled John the Thirteenth. Even the populace, bigoted as it was, was beginning to wonder whether really and truly the perpetrators of such wickedness could be the vicars of God, the successors of St. Peter.

The characteristics of the tenth century have been well described by Mr. Maurice, and the marked condemnation of them will come, perhaps, with more telling force from his pen than from that of a free-thinker; for, as he tells us himself in his preface, he writes as a theologian and from a theological point of view. Therefore we may not unfairly

conclude, that if it were possible for one possessing so large and tolerant a nature as he possessed to be biassed at all, that bias would surely be towards the theological side, and we should not find him, without some very clear cause, contrasting favourably the condition of Mahometan Spain with that of Christian Italy. Yet these are his words :—

'The tenth century is dark from its broad and manifest abominations, from the utter absence of principle among nobles and Churchmen, from the want of any thinking that can be called earnest by its admirers, or mystical and unpractical by its despisers ; from all those indications which most betray the worldly character and purposes of the men who, under one mask or another, were playing their different parts.

'If England presented itself as a kind of intellectual centre in the eighth century, France in the ninth, we may hesitate to what country we should assign that position in the tenth. Italy is, unquestionably, the scene of the most exciting political intrigues of the time ; the capital of Western Christendom is the place in which its blackest enormities are gathered up and from which they diffuse themselves abroad. Italy is the battlefield whereon all the selfish interests of families who claim lands and people for their hereditary possession are engaged. The Popedom becomes the prize for the counts, dukes, harlots who, by one foul means or another, are enabled to make good their supremacy. But the crimes of Italy call forth an avenger. The tenth century brings the German Empire to light. In Germany is the centre of a much more vigorous and, on the whole, healthy power. The princes and ecclesiastics of Italy are obliged to bow before it, because some of the morality of the North is found in it and gives it dominion. The world had reason to rejoice when the descendants of Arminius claimed to be the successors of the Cæsars, and to establish or unseat the spiritual fathers at their pleasure. Considering the circumstances of the tenth century, this

was a divine boon to the nations. Yet it showed that all but naked despotism was the only possible resource for that wicked time; that the idea of moral and spiritual power was almost extinct. To call either Italy or Germany, therefore, an intellectual centre of Europe at this time is an abuse of terms. Possibly we shall be more right if we concede that name to Spain. Humiliating as that confession may be, the sense of a power that was not merely physical or merely artificial, upheld by the strength of the arm, or created by man's ingenuity, dwelt with the Saracen. The study of the laws of nature, of laws which men could not regulate, but must confess, was pursued more successfully and diligently at Cordova than in any city of Christendom. Thither Christian scholars must resort, if they were not ready to confess that God revealed the secrets of His universe exclusively to the Mussulman, and that those who believed in the Incarnation of His Son were to know nothing but the arts of the basest politicans, or the lies by which the basest Churchmen saved them from detection.'[1]

The only glimmering of intellectual light that existed in Christian Europe during the Middle Ages, was derived almost entirely from the influence of Scholasticism; and Scholasticism, in its turn, owed almost all its better features to the industry and culture of the Arabians.

Scholasticism has fared somewhat badly at the hands of modern critics. Not very unnaturally so, perhaps. The trivial disputes, the merely verbal distinctions, the mysticism and obscurity that for the most part characterise the writings of the Schoolmen, are apt to confuse and bewilder everyone who is not gifted with a peculiar aptitude and liking for metaphysical subtletics and verbal distinctions. The age in which we live is, for the most part, of too practical a character to take delight in studies that are essentially unpractical, and lead to No Man's Land. And in an age of doubt and perpetual inquiry and questioning, like the

[1] 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,' vol. i. pp. 502-503.

present, it is somewhat difficult to understand, much less to sympathise with, the blind admiration and servile imitation evinced for Aristotle by the Schoolmen.

Yet we must remember that even a devotion to metaphysical subtleties and verbal distinctions is a worthier occupation than deeds of bloodshed, lust, and rapine, and delight in ignorance and want of culture. And although we may justly lament that the reverence for Aristotle was carried to so extreme a point, yet a great philosopher like the Stagyrite was at least a worthier object of reverence than the prohibitions or commands of the various Councils, decreed, for the most part, by cardinals and popes notorious for their ignorance and evil-living. The transition period from Reason to Faith may be represented, we think, by Neo-Platonism; and, in like manner, the transition period from Faith to Reason may be fitly represented by Scholasticism in the first place, and in the second place by the Reformation.

We will proceed now to give a very short summary of the principal characteristics of Scholasticism.

The great dispute of the Schoolmen was the dispute between Nominalism and Realism; and Roscellinus, whose name has descended to us as the advocate and martyr of Nominalism, is considered by some to be the founder of the Scholastic philosophy; although there are many, perhaps, indeed, a majority of authorities, who assign that place to Johannes Erigena. It was the old struggle revived between names and things. The Realists thought that the general types of things had a real existence, the Nominalists that they were a mere mental abstraction expressed by a word. But even this dispute, frivolous as it appears, frightened and greatly angered the Church, for this controversy concerning names and things was chiefly pointed (as in that day nearly all controversies were pointed) in the direction of questions concerning the Trinity. Roscellinus, in his anxiety to show that universals were but mere names, and,

apart from individuals, had no objective existence, was impelled by logical necessity to go further and touch upon subjects that were sure to be deemed rank heresy by the Church. He declared that the doctrine which could set forth that there were three persons in the Trinity was incompatible with the unity of real existence. He argued that the three persons must either be quite distinct, and one only in name, or else that the three persons must form but One God, in which case God exists alone without distinction of persons. By such an argument he alarmed and angered the Church, and he was peremptorily commanded to appear before the Council and publicly abjure his errors. He obeyed this command, and by so doing escaped consequences that would otherwise in all probability have terminated fatally.

Yet, if Nominalism had fallen under the persecution of the Church, Realism offended her scarcely less. For if Nominalism had declared that universals possessed no objective existence, Realism almost insinuated that God was the noumenon of every phenomenon, the reality or basis which lay at the root of every objective existence; that He was not only the cause and origin, but contained within Himself all phenomenal being; and thus there was a tendency to identify all substances in one substance. But the outcome of such an argument necessarily led to Pantheism, and Pantheism was regarded by the Church with little less horror than absolute Atheism.

But though the Church (through the fact of her possession of legal power) came out the apparent victor amidst these disputes, those disputes had nevertheless intrinsically and implicitly weakened her power. Coupled with the horror and indignation felt by the populace at the crimes of the Popes, there were not a few of the more thoughtful Christians who were gradually, very secretly, and perhaps almost unconsciously, losing all faith in the infallibility of the Church. Many among these left their native place, lest

in some unguarded moment they might betray their secret opinions, and thus bring upon themselves the rancour and virulence of the Church; and took up their abode in Andalusia, or Cordova, or some other city rejoicing in the merciful and tolerant sway of the Mahometans.

These self-exiled Christians attended the Mahometan schools, took part in the Mahometan studies and recreations; and it is even said that, though they retained their own rites and religious ceremonies, they nevertheless frequently intermarried with Mahometan families.

It was not only for persecuted Christians that Arabian Spain formed a haven of refuge. The Jews were a race that had been pitilessly and remorselessly tortured for ages by the Catholic Church. With this unhappy people it was frequently not even of any avail to keep silence and refrain from giving vent to heretical opinions. The mere fact of being a Jew—sometimes, indeed, even the fact of being of Jewish descent or of being possessed of Jewish connexions—formed a convenient pretext with the Church for gratifying her love of oppression, or was twisted into a plausible excuse for extorting Jewish money and lands. Such Jews, therefore, as were capable of leaving the country of their oppressors, naturally did so, and for the most part selected Arabia or Spain as the land of their adoption. The Jews were a monotheistic, industrious, and, for the most part, peace-loving people; fond of making money, but also very ardent in their pursuit of knowledge and learning. They amalgamated well with the studious Mahometans; and when, in addition, they were joined by the sprinkling of thoughtful, questioning, self-exiled Christians, Arabian Spain and Spanish Arabia must have displayed a galaxy of refined, cultured, and tolerant men unequalled by any part of the then known world.

Amongst the many great Arabian and Jewish names we might mention, we will merely select those few that more nearly concern us in a treatise of this description.

Alkendi and Al-Farabi are the two first Arabian names that meet us of any note. They flourished about the ninth and tenth centuries; but the chief interest they possess for us, lies in the fact that Alkendi was selected by the Caliph as the man he thought most capable of rendering a trustworthy and readable translation of Aristotle. Al-Farabi also devoted a good deal of time and labour to the study of Aristotle; and in addition, unlike the majority of Arabian philosophers, paid considerable attention to the philosophy of Plato. They both of them also took much interest in the science of medicine. But as physicians they were completely eclipsed by Avicenna, whose talents were of so high an order, and whose precocity was so great, that at the age of seventeen it is said he was appointed medical adviser to the Emir Nou'h-ben Mansour, whom he cured of a serious malady.

But the Arabian philosopher who has the most interest for us in the present treatise is Abubacer, who wrote a philosophical romance, which, as it indicates very clearly the tendency, partly Pantheistic, partly Neo-Platonic, philosophical thought was again taking, we will quote as we find it given, or rather epitomised, in Mr. Lewes' 'History of Philosophy.'

The romance is entitled 'Philosophus Auto-didactus,' and the object of it appears to be an attempt on the part of Abubacer to trace the development of an intelligence unbiassed by society and its traditions and prejudices:—

'His hero, Haï, is born on a desert island situated beneath the equator. In lieu of human parents his generation takes place through certain physical conditions; which did not appear so preposterous in the eyes of Abubacer's contemporaries and successors as in the eyes of moderns; spontaneous generation being an universally accepted hypothesis in those days. Haï had a gazelle for his wet-nurse. The different periods of his development are marked by the successive advances which he makes in

the comprehension of things. From the simple knowledge of sensible things, he gradually arrives at a conception of the world and its physical laws. Later on he recognises the unity which underlies variety. Things, though multiple in their accidents, are one in esssence. He thus arrives at the knowledge of Matter and Forms. The first Form is Species. All bodies are united by corporeity, *i.e.* the corporeal Form.

'Contemplating Matter and Forms, he enters the spiritual world. It is obvious that inferior objects are produced by something. There must, therefore, be a Producer of Forms, since whatever is produced must have a producer. Directing his attention to the heavens, Haï sees a variety of celestial bodies, which cannot be infinite. The celestial spheres are as one individual, and thus the whole universe is an entirety. Is this entirety eternal? Haï is unable to decide, but inclines to the belief that it is eternal. Be that as it may, he recognises an *agent* which perpetuates the existence of the world and sets it in motion. This agent is neither a body; nor a faculty of a body, it is the Form of the universe. All beings are the work of this Supreme Being; and our minds contemplating the beauty of the work necessarily ascend to its Creator, his goodness and perfection. All forms are in him and issue from him, so that there is in truth no other existence.

'Haï now looks inwards. He finds that his intellect is absolutely incorporeal, since it perceives things divested of all quality—and this neither the senses nor the imagination are capable of doing. Therein lies the real essence of man, that which is neither born nor dies. The intellect is troubled by matter, and endeavours to disengage itself by giving to the body only such care as is indispensable to existence. Its beatitude and its pain are in a direct ratio to its union with God or its distance from Him. By ecstacy man unites himself with God. Then the universe appears to him only God, whose light is shed over all, but manifests itself in

greater splendour in the purest beings. Multiplicity exists only for the senses. It disappears before the intellect which has disengaged itself from matter.'[1]

This romance acquired great popularity at the time it was written—a popularity, indeed, which has never been entirely outgrown, for at various times it has been translated severally into the Latin, English, Dutch, and German languages. The reader who has gone through the earlier part of this sketch will readily perceive a decided similarity between the conceptions of Neo-Platonism and those of Abubacer.

But the Arabian philosopher who even more nearly resembles the Neo-Platonists is Algazzāli, the 'Light of Islam,' the 'Pillar of the Mosque,' as he has been frequently called.

In the following account of this eminent philosopher we again quote from Mr. Lewes' valuable history:—

'Algazzāli was born in the city of Tous, A.D. 1058. His father was a dealer in cotton thread (*gazzal*), from whence he drew his name. Losing his father in early life, he was confided to the care of a Soufi. The nearest approach to what is meant by a Soufi is what we mean by mystic. The influence of this Soufi was great. No sooner had the youth finished his studies, than he was appointed professor of theology at Bagdad, where his eloquence achieved such splendid success that all the Imans became his eager partisans. So great was the admiration he inspired, that the Mussulmans sometimes said, 'If all Islam were destroyed it would be but a slight loss, provided Algazzāli's work on the "Revivication of the Sciences of Religion" were preserved.' This work, probably owing to its originality, was never translated into Latin during the Middle Ages, and remained a closed book to all but Arabian scholars until M. Schmölders published his version. It bears so remarkable a resemblance to the *Discours sur la Méthode* of Des-

[1] 'History of Philosophy,' by G. H. Lewes, vol. ii. pp. 47, 48.

cartes, that had any translation of it existed in the days of Descartes everyone would have cried out against its plagiarism. Like Descartes, he begins with describing how he had in vain interrogated every sect for an answer to the mysterious problems which "disturbed him with a sense of things unknown;" and how he finally resolved to discard all authority, and detach himself from the opinions which had been instilled into him during the unsuspecting years of childhood. "I said to myself," he proceeds, "my aim is simply to know the truth of things, consequently it is indispensable for me to ascertain what is *knowledge*. Now, it was evident for me that *certain knowledge* must be that which explains the object to be known in such a manner that no doubt can remain, so that in future all error and conjecture respecting it must be impossible. Not only would the understanding then need no efforts to be convinced of certitude, but security against error is in such close connection with knowledge, that even were an apparent proof of its falsehood to be brought forward it would cause no doubt, because no suspicion of error would be possible. Thus, when I have acknowledged ten to be more than three, if anyone were to say, 'On the contrary, three is more than ten; and to prove the truth of my assertion I will change this rod into a serpent;' and if he *were* to change it, my conviction of his error would remain unshaken. His manœuvre would only produce in me admiration for his ability. I should not doubt my own knowledge.

'"Then was I convinced that knowledge which I did not possess in this manner, and respecting which I had not this certainty, could inspire me with neither confidence nor assurance; and no knowledge without assurance deserves the name of knowledge.

'"Having examined the state of my own knowledge, I found it could be divested of all that could be said to have these qualities, unless perceptions of the senses and irre-

fragable principles were to be considered such. I then said to myself, 'Now, having fallen into this despair, the only hope remaining of acquiring incontestable convictions is by the perception of the senses, and by necessary truths.' *Their* evidence seemed to me indubitable. I began, however, to examine the objects of sensation and speculation, to see if they could possibly admit of doubt. Then doubts crowded upon me in such numbers that my incertitude became complete. Whence results the confidence I have in sensible things? The strongest of all our senses is sight; and yet, looking at a shadow and perceiving it to be fixed and immovable, we judge it to be deprived of movement; nevertheless, experience teaches us that, when we return to the same place an hour after, the shadow is displaced, for it does not vanish suddenly, but gradually, little by little, so as never to be at rest. If we look at the stars they seem as small as money-pieces, but mathematical proofs convince us they are larger than the earth. These and other things are judged by the senses, but rejected by reason as false. I abandoned the senses, therefore, having seen all my confidence in their truth shaken.

'"Perhaps," said I, "there is no assurance but in the notions of reason; that is to say, first principles, *e.g.* ten is more than three; the same thing cannot have been created and yet have existed from all eternity; to exist and not to exist at the same time is impossible."

'"Upon this the senses replied: 'What assurance have you that your confidence in Reason is not of the same nature as your confidence in us? When you relied on us Reason stepped in and gave us the lie; had not Reason been there you would have continued to rely on us. Well, may there not exist some other judge superior to Reason, who, if he appeared, would refute the judgments of Reason in the same way that Reason refuted us? The non-appearance of such a judge is no proof of his non-existence.'"

'These sceptical arguments Algazzāli borrowed from

the Grecian sceptics, and having borrowed them, he likewise borrowed from the Grecian mystics, of the Alexandrian School, the means of escape from scepticism. He looked upon life as a dream. "I strove in vain to answer the objections. And my difficulties increased when I came to reflect upon sleep. I said to myself, 'During sleep you give to visions a reality and consistence, and you have no suspicion of their untruth. On awakening you are made aware they were nothing but visions. What assurance have you that all you feel and know when awake does actually exist? It is all true as respects your condition at that moment; but it is nevertheless possible that another condition should present itself which should be to your awakened state that which your awakened state is now to your sleep; so that in respect to this higher condition your waking is but sleep.'" If such a higher condition be granted, Algazzāli asks whether we can ever attain to participation in it. He suspects that the ecstacy described by the Soufis must be the very condition. But he finds himself philosophically unable to escape the consequences of scepticism; the sceptical arguments could only be refuted by demonstrations. But demonstrations themselves must be founded on first principles; if *they* are uncertain no demonstration can be certain.

'"I was thus forced to return to the admission of intellectual notions as the basis of all certitude. *This, however, was not by systematic reasoning and accumulation of proof, but by a flash of light which God sent into my soul.* For whoever imagines that *truth can only be rendered evident by proofs* places narrow limits to the wide compassion of the Creator."

'Thus we see Algazzāli eluding scepticism just as the Alexandrians eluded it—taking refuge in faith. He then cast his eyes on the various sects of the faithful, whom he ranged under four classes:—

'First, the Dogmatists: those who ground their doctrine wholly upon reason.

'Second, the Bastînîs, or Allegorists: those who receive their doctrine from an Imam and believe themselves sole possessors of truth.

'Third, the philosophers: those who call themselves masters of logic and demonstration.

'Fourth, the Soufis: those who claim an *immediate intuition*, by which they perceive the real manifestations of truth, as ordinary men perceive material phenomena.

'These schools he resolved thoroughly to question. In the writings of the Dogmatists he acknowledged that their aim was realised—but their aim was not his aim. "Their aim," he says, "is the preservation of the faith from the alterations produced by heretics." But his object was philosophical, not theological; so he turned from the Dogmatists to the Philosophers, studying their works with intense ardour, convinced that he could not refute them till he had thoroughly understood them. He did refute them entirely to his satisfaction; and, having done so, turned to the Soufis, in whose writings he found a doctrine which required the union of action with speculation, in which virtue was a guide to knowledge. The aim of the Soufis was to free the mind from earthly considerations, to purify it from all passions, to leave it only God as an object of meditation. The highest truths were not to be reached by *study*, but by *transport*—by a transformation of the soul during *ecstacy*. There is the same difference between this higher order of truth and ordinary science, as between being healthy and knowing the definition of health. To reach this state it was necessary first to purify the soul from all earthly desires, to extirpate from it all attachment to the world, and humbly direct the thoughts to our eternal home.

'"Reflecting on my situation, I found myself bound to this world by a thousand ties, temptations assailing me on all sides. I then examined my actions. The best were those relating to instruction and education; and even then I saw myself given up to unimportant sciences, all useless

in another world. Reflecting on the aim of my teaching, I found it was not pure in the sight of the Lord. I saw that all my efforts were directed towards the acquisition of glory to myself."

'Thus did philosophy lead him to a speculative asceticism, which calamity was shortly afterwards to transform into practical asceticism. One day, as he was about to lecture to a throng of admiring auditors, his tongue refused utterance: he was dumb. This seemed to him a visitation of God, a rebuke to his vanity, which deeply affected him. He lost his appetite; he was fast sinking; physicians declared his recovery hopeless, unless he could shake off the sadness which depressed him. He sought refuge in the contemplation of the Deity.

'"Having distributed my wealth, I left Bagdad and retired into Syria, where I remained two years in solitary struggle with my soul, combating my passions and exercising myself in the purification of my heart and in preparation for the other world."

'He visited Jerusalem, and made a pilgrimage to Mecca, but at length returned to Bagdad, urged thereto by "private affairs" and the requests of his children, as he says, but more probably urged thereto by his sense of failure, for he confesses not to have reached the *ecstatic* stage. Occasional glimpses were all that he could attain, isolated moments of exaltation passing quickly away.

'"Nevertheless I did not despair of finally attaining this state. Every time that any accident turned me from it, I endeavoured quickly to re-enter it. In this condition I remained ten years. In my solitude there were revelations made to me which it is impossible for me to describe, or even indicate. Enough if, for the reader's profit, I declare that the conviction was forced upon me that the Soufis indubitably walked in the true paths of salvation. Their way of life is the most beautiful, and their morals the purest that can be conceived.

'"The first condition of Soufi purification is, that the novice purge his heart of all that is not God. Prayers are the means. The object is *absorption of the Deity.*

'"From the very first, Soufis have such astonishing revelations that they are enabled, while walking, to see visions of angels and the souls of the prophets; they hear their voices and receive their favours. Afterwards a transport exalts them beyond the mere perception of forms to a degree which exceeds all expression, and concerning which we cannot speak without employing language that would sound blasphemous. In fact, some have gone so far as to imagine themselves to be *amalgamated with God*; others *identified* with Him; and others to be *associated* with Him. All these are sinful."'

'Algazzāli refuses to enter more minutely into this subject; he contents himself with the assertion that whoso knows not ecstacy knows prophetism only by name. And what is *Prophetism?* The fourth stage in intellectual development. The first or infantile stage is that of pure Sensation; the second which begins at seven, is that of Understanding; the third is Reason, by means of which the intellect perceives the necessary, the possible, the absolute, and all those higher objects which transcend the understanding. After this comes the fourth stage, when another eye is opened by which man perceives all things hidden from others—perceives all that will be—perceives things that escape the perceptions of Reason, as the objects of Reason escape the Understanding, and as the objects of the Understanding escape the sensitive faculty. This is Prophetism. Algazzāli undertakes to prove the existence of this faculty:—

'"Doubts respecting Prophetism must refer either to its possibility or its reality. To prove its possibility it is only necessary to prove that it belongs to the category of objects which cannot be regarded as the products of intelligence: such, for example, as Astronomy or Medicine. For whoso

studies these sciences is aware that they cannot be comprehended except by Divine inspiration—with the assistance of God, and not by experience. Since there are astronomical indications which appear only once in a thousand years, how could they be known by experience? From this argument it is evident that it is very possible to perceive things which the intellect cannot conceive. And this is precisely one of the properties of Prophetism, which has a myriad other properties; but these are only perceptible during Ecstacy, by those who lead the life of the Soufis."[1]

But the Arabian philosopher who indirectly exercised the widest influence over European thought was Averroes, one of the ablest men, among many able, that Arabia had produced. He was a voluminous commentator upon Aristotle, and had devoted much time to the study of Astronomy. It is said he was the first who discovered spots on the Sun. But his scientific knowledge had led him to the rejection of all revelation alike, whether Christian or Mahometan.

The knowledge of the writings of Averroes, and indeed, of Mahometan literature in general, among Europeans, may be considered as chiefly due to the efforts of one Gerbert, a French ecclesiastic, born at Auvergne. He had, whilst a boy, attracted the attention of the Count of Barcelona, who took him to Spain, where he became a proficient in the mathematics, astronomy, and physics of the Mahometan schools. He resided at Cordova, the birthplace of Averroes, and when he returned to Christendom, he could not help comparing the ignorance and vice he found there with the enlightenment and learning of the Mahometans. He declared bitterly that there was no one in Rome who knew enough of letters to qualify him for a doorkeeper. He openly and fearlessly alluded to the abominable practices

[1] 'History of Philosophy,' vol. ii. pp. 49–55.

of the popes, and asked whether it were possible any longer for the priests of God—men distinguished for their holy lives—to submit to 'monsters full of all infamy, void of all knowledge, human and divine.' After comparing the iniquity of Rome with the purity of Cordova, he declared it to be a lamentable, but by no means an incomprehensible, fact, that Rome had 'already lost the allegiance of the East; Alexandria, Antioch, Africa, and Asia had separated themselves from her; Constantinople had broken loose from her; the interior of Spain knew nothing of the Pope.'

Gerbert was one of the first ecclesiastics who ever presumed to question the infallibility of the Pope. Less than a century afterwards he was followed in this presumption by one even more daring than himself, the famous Abelard. The behaviour of these two questioners may be regarded as the first indication and earliest germ from which was shortly to issue the Protest of Wickliffe, which grew gradually into maturity under the name of the Reformation.

Gerbert himself was raised to the dignity of the Papal chair under the title of Sylvester the Second. His death is supposed to have been occasioned by the administration of poison through the jealousy and malice of one of his numerous enemies. His sway, while papal sovereign, was so wise and beneficial that the growing irritation against the conduct of the former popes was temporarily assuaged or forgotten; but after his death it again began to make itself felt.

A low plebeian monk of Cluny, Hildebrand by name, was raised to the Papal chair under the title of Gregory the Seventh. The arrogant assumption of this pope was so great that it might almost be termed a species of madness. He wantonly and remorselessly insulted the kings of France, Hungary, Poland, and Spain; yet, though his conduct was bitterly resented by those princes, the times were not sufficiently ripe for them to dare to contend against his extra-

vagant claims. Moreover the Crusading movement was at its height; and the Crusades were a source of such all-absorbing interest that little else was thought of, much less done.

It was not till the voice of Abelard made itself heard that men became conscious of the resentment and indignation that had been so long smouldering within their breasts. Now for the first time they began in earnest to search out and investigate the condition of the Church, which, though its claims were higher than ever, was in even a more deplorable state than in the time of Gerbert. There was actually a schism in the Chair of St. Peter itself. Two popes each professed to be the lineal successors of the Apostle. Alexander the Third and Victor the Fourth were supported by different factions; and for eighteen years, from 1159 to 1177, there was presented the unedifying spectacle of two contending heads of Christendom interchanging threats and curses, and denouncing each other as Antichrist.

The condition of the clergy was scarcely less open to reproach. With very few exceptions the members alike of the higher and lower ranks of the clergy were sunk in sensuality and vice of every description. The only use they made of their holy office was to employ it as a cloak and cover for their unmentionable sins. Things were coming to such a pass that it became difficult for the laity any longer to hold their peace. Murmurings and protests were beginning to be openly uttered. The Church saw her danger. She could not shut her eyes to the fact that intrinsically her power was weakened, if not absolutely departed. But she was not daunted. If her intrinsic glory had forsaken her, she would seek extrinsic aid. If her infallibility were no longer believed in, she would not stoop to argue the recusants into re-belief, but would torture and burn them into silence and submission.

Thus was commenced a diabolical system of barbarity and cruelty, accompanied with rigid surveillance and espionage, which was soon to be organised into the infernal institution of unhappy fame calling itself by the name of The Inquisition.

CHAPTER III.

SERVETUS.

THE paganisation and degradation of Christianity effected by the Catholic Church, a brief account of which has been related in the last two chapters, gave rise at last to open rebellion and revolt. In the thirteenth century we are met with the Albigensian revolt, in the fourteenth with that of Wickliffe and the Lollards. But the Church, with the paramount power and absolute authority that still belonged to her, was able to quench these schisms almost as soon as they began to make themselves heard; and John Huss, one of the principal Lollard leaders, was unscrupulously burnt to death as an example and warning to all future heretics.

But though the fire had apparently been thus victoriously extinguished, the ashes were still smouldering; and it required but a very little matter to set it alight again—a draught of air accidentally let in, or a pair of bellows deliberately applied, as the case might be, would very quickly rekindle it into flames. And in the sixteenth century the Reformation breaks in upon us in its full strength and youthful ardour, under the leadership of Martin Luther and John Calvin.

When Luther first lifted up his voice against the iniquity of purchasing indulgences for sin, it is probable that he himself was little conscious of the enormous dimensions his protest was so shortly to assume. The success of any cause, whether religious or political, may be likened

to the successful raising of a tree or plant—it is not enough that the seed be pure and good and abundantly scattered abroad, but it also requires the soil to be properly adapted and carefully prepared. The secret of Luther's success lay in the fact that he was eminently the outgrowth of the period in which he lived; he was the man of his time, the product of his age. Gifted though he undoubtedly was, in no other century, we imagine, would the seed of his doctrine have borne such abundant fruit as in the earlier half of the sixteenth. Doubt and discontent were in the very air, and Luther was but the spokesman able to put the half-uttered thoughts of others into eloquent language.

We have such deep admiration for the Reformation; we believe it has performed so important a part in the history of European civilisation; we are so conscious of it being the germ out of which reason and experimental science grew, to the displacement of ignorance and servile submission to authority, that it is painful to us to be obliged to devote a chapter to the exposure of the greatest blot upon it that has as yet happened, and to give a detailed account of cruelty and bigotry as great as was ever displayed under the blackest phase of Catholic Christianity. Yet, as in a treatise of this description the story of Michael Servetus, part mystic, part pantheist, certainly deserves some little notice, we must put our scruples on one side, and proceed to the relation of the history of the man who was cruelly done to death by the vindictiveness and bigotry of the early Reformer, John Calvin.[1]

[1] 'I am more deeply scandalised,' says Gibbon, 'at the single execution of Servetus, than at the hecatombs which have blazed at the auto-de-fés of Spain and Portugal. The zeal of Calvin seems to have been envenomed by personal malice and perhaps envy. He accused his adversary before their common enemies, the judges of Vienne, and betrayed, for his destruction, the sacred trust of a private correspondence. The deed of cruelty was not varnished by the pretence of danger to the Church or State. In his passage through Geneva, Servetus was a harmless stranger who neither preached nor made proselytes.

Both the date and place of the birth of Servetus are somewhat uncertain. According to some authorities he was born at Tudela, in the kingdom of Navarre; according to others he was born at Villaneuva, in the kingdom of Arragon. The most probable date of his birth lies somewhere between the years 1508 and 1512. Of his parents we know scarcely anything save that they seem to have come of gentle blood, and that his mother's maiden name was Revés, an *alias* that was not unfrequently assumed in after-life by her son. In all probability the profession of his father was that of a notary.

Servetus seems to have been originally destined by his parents for the Church, and, in accordance with this view, was placed for his education in one of the convents at or near his native town. At twelve or fourteen years of age he appears to have entered the University of Saragossa, which at that time took rank as the most eminent university in Spain. At Saragossa he remained some four or five years studying with industry, and distinguishing himself by his proficiency in classics, philosophy, and as much of science as was then capable of being learnt. Religious doubts most probably assailed him early, for before he had left college we find that he has renounced all intention of the Church as a means of livelihood, and intends to devote himself instead to the hereditary profession of his family, namely, that of law. His father does not seem to have combated this intentional change of profession in his son, but sent him to Toulouse, in which school Servetus was duly entered as student of law, and where he remained about three years. Ultimately he became neither lawyer nor priest, but physician.

The natural bent of his mind, however, was certainly

A Catholic inquisitor yields the same obedience which he requires, but Calvin violated the golden rule of doing as he would be done by; a rule which is to be found in a moral treatise of Isocrates, four hundred years before the publication of the Gospel.'

theological, and indeed we think that throughout the whole of his life his character displays itself as that of an earnest, pious, but decidedly somewhat mystical zealot. When at Toulouse he made acquaintance for the first time with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. He admired them greatly, and subsequently, in his first work, describes the Bible as a 'book come down from heaven.' At Toulouse also he became acquainted with the writings of various of the Reformers, but finds himself not entirely at one with the opinions of any of these. 'For my own part,' he says, 'I neither agree nor disagree in every particular with either Catholic or Reformer. Both of them seem to me to have something of truth and something of error in their views; and whilst each sees the other's shortcomings, neither sees his own. God, in His goodness, gives us all to understand our errors and inclines us to put them away. It would be easy indeed to judge dispassionately of everything, were we but suffered without molestation by the churches freely to speak our minds; the older exponents of doctrine, in obedience to the recommendation of St. Paul, giving place to younger men, and these in their turn making way for teachers of the day who had aught to impart that had been revealed to them. But our doctors now contend for nothing but power. The Lord confound all tyrants of the Church! Amen.'[1] Yet, in spite of this impartial, dispassionate mode of balancing the faults and virtues of Catholicism and Protestantism one against another, there are times when it is plain that Servetus has conceived a most bitter repugnance against the Papacy, for we find him indulging in vituperations against it that he never permits himself to employ against Protestantism. At one time he apostrophises the Papacy thus: '*O bestia, bestiarum, meretrix sceleratissima.*'—'O beast, most beastly, most wicked of harlots.'

[1] See Dr. Willis's recent interesting work on 'Servetus and Calvin,' page 25.

In 1531 was published the first book that threw much suspicion on Servetus—Seven Books on Mistaken Conceptions of the Trinity, or (as the Latin title ran) '*De Trinitatis Erroribus, Libri Septem. Per Michaelem Servcto alias Revés. Ab Aragonia, Hispanum*, 1531.'

In common with many before and since himself, Servetus was unable to comprehend the ordinary orthodox conceptions of the Trinity. He could not understand how the Son could be co-eternal with the Father. He agreed with Arius in concluding that in the very nature of things the Father must have a longer origin in time than the Son. He stated his belief that Christ should be called the Son of the Eternal God, and not the Eternal Son of God. And, still further, he asserted his conviction that the existence of three distinct persons or entities in the unity of the Godhead is an impossibility, and consequently a fundamental religious error.

This work seems to have given greater offence to the Protestants than the Catholics. Bucer, one of the leading Reformers of Strasburg, denounced Servetus from the pulpit, declaring that the writer of such a book deserved to be disembowelled and torn in pieces! Œcolampadius, another Reformer, declared solemnly that until Servetus would acknowledge the co-eternity of the Father with the Son he, for his part, would refuse to believe that he could be in any requisite sense of the word a Christian at all. And indeed every one of the Reformers were anxious to disclaim all connection with any of the opinions and writings of Servetus.[1]

[1] 'After a fair discussion,' says Gibbon, 'we are rather surprised by the timidity than scandalised by the freedom of our first Reformers. With the Jews they adopted the belief and defence of all the Hebrew Scriptures, from the Garden of Eden to visions of the prophet Daniel; and they were bound, like the Catholics, to justify against the Jews the abolition of a Divine law. In the great mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation the Reformers were severely orthodox: they freely adopted the theology of the four or the first six Councils; and with the Athanasian Creed they pronounced the eternal damnation of all who did not believe the Catholic faith. Transubstantiation—the invisible

In common with the majority of deep thinkers (many greater than himself), the religious opinions of Servetus were strongly coloured with pantheism. 'God,' he says, 'is eternal, one and indivisible, and in Himself inscrutable,

change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ—is a tenet that may defy the power of argument and pleasantry; but instead of consulting the evidence of their senses, of their sight, their feeling, and their taste, the first Protestants were entangled in their own scruples, and awed by the words of Jesus in the institution of the Sacrament. Luther maintained a *corporeal* and Calvin a *real* presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and the opinion of Zwinglius, that it is no more than a spiritual communion, a simple memorial, has slowly prevailed in the Reformed Churches. But the loss of the one mystery was amply compensated by the stupendous doctrines of original sin, redemption, faith, grace, and predestination, which had been strained from the Epistles of St. Paul. These subtle questions had been most assuredly prepared by the Fathers and the Schoolmen; but the final improvement and popular use may be attributed to the first Reformers, who enforced them as the absolute and essential terms of salvation. Hitherto the weight of supernatural belief inclines against the Protestants, and many a sober Christian would rather admit that a wafer is God than that God is a cruel and capricious tyrant.

'Yet the services of Luther and his rivals are solid and important, and the philosopher must own his obligations to these fearless enthusiasts. By their hands the lofty fabric of superstition, from the abuse of indulgences to the intercession of the Virgin, has been levelled with the ground. Myriads of both sexes of the monastic profession were restored to the liberty and labours of social life. A hierarchy of saints and angels, of imperfect and subordinate deities, were stripped of their temporal power, and reduced to the enjoyment of celestial happiness; their images and relics were banished from the Church; and the credulity of the people was no longer nourished with the daily repetition of miracles and visions. The imitation of paganism was supplied by a pure and spiritual worship of prayer and thanksgiving, the most worthy of man, the least unworthy of the Deity. The chain of authority was broken, which restrains the bigot from thinking as he pleases, and the slave from speaking as he thinks; the Popes, Fathers, and Councils were no longer the supreme and infallible judges of the world; and each Christian was taught to acknowledge no law but the Scriptures, no interpreter but his own conscience. This freedom, however, was the consequence rather than the design of the Reformation. The patriot Reformers were ambitious of succeeding the tyrants whom they dethroned. They imposed with equal rigour their creeds and confessions; they asserted the right of the magistrate to punish heretics with death. The pious or personal animosity of Calvin proscribed in Servetus, the guilt of his own rebellion, and the flames of Smithfield, in which he was afterwards consumed, had been kindled for the Anabaptists by the zeal of Cranmer. The nature of the tiger was the same, but he was gradually deprived of his teeth and fangs.'

but making His being known in and through creation, so that not only is every living but every lifeless thing an aspect of the Deity. Before creation was God was; but neither was He Light, nor Word, nor Spirit, but some ineffable thing else, these, Light, Word, Spirit, being mere dispensations, modes, or expressions of pre-existing Deity. God has no proper nature, for this would imply a beginning; and *before* and *after* are words that have no significance when they are referred to God. Though God knew what to man would be a future, His own prescience was without respect to *time*, and involved no such necessity as is implied in *choice*. God can be defined by nothing that pertains to body; He created the world out of himself, of His substance, and, as essence, He actuates all things. The Spirit of God is the universal agent; it is in the air we breathe, and is the very breath of life; it moves the heavenly bodies, sends out the winds from their quarters, takes up and stores the water in the clouds, and pours it out as rain to fertilise the earth. God is distinct from the universe of things, and when we speak of the Word, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we but speak of the presence and power of God projected into creation, animating and actuating all that therein is, man more especially than aught else. The Holy Spirit is the motion of God in the soul of man; out of man there cannot properly be said to be any Holy Spirit.'

Such passages as above quoted of course display very strongly how greatly imbued were the opinions of Servetus with the spirit of Pantheism. Yet he did not throw off his allegiance to Christianity. In some mystical sort of way (satisfactory to himself, but, we should imagine, to few others) he tried to reconcile his new opinions with the doctrines of Christianity. In the doctrine of the Incarnation, for instance, he seems quite willing to accept as a truth the virginity of the Mother of our Lord. Yet it puzzles him to think how such a miracle could have happened. After due consideration he brings himself to the

conclusion that the Holy Ghost, or more properly a divine afflatus or essence proceeding from God, must have acted upon the Virgin as a sort of generative dew. In some mystical sort of way, too, he has his own belief in a Trinity, but it is perfectly distinct from the generally received doctrine on that subject. He declares that the ordinary orthodox conception of the Christian Trinity has been a great obstacle to the progress of the religion of Christ, for which reason he will even shrink from employing the term more often than is obligatory upon him in discussing the subject. The word 'Trinity,' he goes on to state, is not once to be found in the Scripture; it is utterly against the monotheistic teaching of the Hebrews; and the only part it has played has been that of increasing and perpetuating philosophical error.

This book caused Servetus to be regarded with so much suspicion that he deemed it wise to quit Switzerland; and we next find him dwelling at Paris under the name of Villeneuve. It was during the early part of his residence there—namely, about 1533—that he first made the acquaintance of the man who was subsequently to prove his bitterest enemy—John Calvin.

Most probably it was Servetus himself who sought the acquaintance of the Reformer, imagining there might be some communion of thought between them, and that with mutual benefit and pleasure they would be able to discuss the subjects of religion and metaphysics one with the other. If such were his hopes Servetus was to shortly discover how gravely he had erred in his judgment of Calvin. That Reformer was not endowed with the temper to bear opposition calmly; and anything like quiet, impartial discussion was with him almost an impossibility. Calvin never seems to have cared much for the society of Servetus; and when, subsequently, he discovered that his disputant of the name of Villeneuve was in reality none other than the author of the 'Trinitatis Erroribus,' Calvin was the

first to betray the whereabouts of Servetus to his persecutors.

His religious opinions, however, were not the only cause of offence in Servetus. He was a believer in astrology. With his dreamy, mystical character the study of astrology naturally seemed very attractive to him. Accordingly he commenced a series of lectures upon this subject, and was in the course of preparing a pamphlet upon it, when the Medical Faculty of Paris interposed and prohibited the publication as unlawful. Servetus, nothing abashed, quietly finished his pamphlet, put it into the hands of the printer, with an injunction to proceed with it in all speed, and remarking at the same time that the quicker it was finished the higher would be his payment. The doctors, excessively wroth at this behaviour in Servetus, had him summoned before the Inquisitor of the King, as an enemy of the Church and preacher of strange doctrines. He obeyed the summons readily, feeling assured that he would be able to answer the charges brought against him satisfactorily; and in this assurance he was not disappointed. He was his own defender, and most probably now for the first time reaped some substantial benefit from the legal education he had received as a youth, for he defended himself so ably that the Inquisitor was forced to confess his conviction of the innocence of the accused, and Servetus accordingly left the court in triumph. His persecutors, determined he should not escape so easily, moved for the institution of a new trial, which was this time to take place before the Tribunal of Parliament, then acting, as it would appear, as a court of justice. The Rector of the University of Paris and the Dean of the Faculty of Physic seem to have been the prosecutors in this new trial; but Servetus does not appear to have been his own defender on this occasion, whether of his own preference or because he was not allowed to be, we are not in a position to state. At all events this trial was not for him such a successful one as the last, and he

certainly comes out from the ordeal less victoriously than on the former occasion. He was peremptorily ordered to call in his pamphlet and to deposit the copies with the proper officers of the court. He was strictly prohibited to appear in public as a professor or practitioner of astrology, and he was commanded to scrupulously render for the future all honour and reverence to the Faculty of Physic in its individual and collective capacity. Finally, he was dismissed with the warning that, should he refuse to comply with these injunctions, he will be deprived of all the privileges he then enjoyed as a graduate of the University of Paris.

Disgusted with the treatment that had been awarded him in Paris, Servetus left that city; and we next find him practising as a medical man at Charlieu, a town some few miles distant from Lyons. At this town he attained his thirtieth year, upon which occasion he was baptised; for amongst the peculiar religious opinions of Servetus was a strong disapproval of infant baptism, and a belief that that ceremony should not take place before the completion of the thirtieth year. 'Christ,' he says 'as an infant was circumcised, but not baptised; and this is a great mystery; in his thirtieth year, however, he received baptism; thereby setting us the example, and teaching us that before this age no one is a fit recipient of the rite that gives the kingdom of heaven to man.'

Upon this question of baptism Servetus even ventured to address Calvin, whom he knew to be about the same age as himself: 'It were fit and proper in you, would you shew true faith in Christ, to submit yourself to baptism, and so receive the gift of the Holy Spirit promised through this means.'

About this time a regular correspondence seems to have been commenced between Servetus and Calvin; and it is evident, from the letters that passed between them, that Calvin, who had been accustomed to be treated as a

sort of little god, and who, in addition, was in the habit of regarding himself with no small feelings of complacency, received, with sensations of haughty displeasure, the monitorial tone that Servetus was occasionally unwise enough to assume to him. Not a few of the letters of Servetus commenced with the words: '*Sæpius te monui.* I have repeatedly admonished you.' And it is not improbable that, coupled with the really honest dislike Calvin entertained for the opinions of Servetus, personal resentment at being treated with so little reverence may, almost unconsciously to himself, have contributed not a little to the cruel treatment of Servetus by that Reformer.

No inconsiderable number of the letters from Servetus to Calvin are remarkable for the Pantheistic passages they contain:—

'God is only known through manifestation or communication in one shape or another. In creation God opened the gates of His Treasury of Eternity.' 'Containing the Essence of the Universe in Himself, God is everywhere, and in everything, and in such wise that He shows Himself to us as fire, as a flower, as a stone.' Existence, in a word, of every kind is in and of God, and in itself is always good; it is act or direction that at any time is bad. But evil, as well as good, he thinks is also comprised in the Essence of God. This is indicated, he thinks, by the Hebrew word *ihei*; and he illustrates his position by the text, 'I form light, and create darkness.' All accidents, further, are in God: whatever befals is not apart from God. Without beginning and without end God is always becoming—*Semper est Deus infieri.*[1]

In another letter Calvin's views on the inefficacy of works, in contradistinction to the saving power of faith, are controverted by Servetus in language that is certainly more forcible than polite:—

'All that men do,' runs his epistle to Calvin,[2] 'you say

[1] 'Servetus and Calvin,' by R. Willis, M.D., p. 174. [2] *Ibid.* p. 175.

is done in sin, and is mixed with dregs that stink before God, and merit nothing but eternal death. But therein you blaspheme. Stripping us of all possible goodness, you do violence to the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, who ascribe perfection or the power of being perfect to us: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). You scout this celestial perfection, because you have never tested perfection of the kind yourself. In the works of the saintly, I say, there is nothing of the corruption you feign. The works of the Spirit shine before God and before men, and in themselves are good and proper. Thou reprobate and blasphemer, who calumniatest the works of the Spirit. *Tu improbus et blasphemus qui opera Spiritus calumniaris!*'

In 1546 Servetus sent Calvin a manuscript copy of his new work entitled 'Christianismi Restitutio,' returning at the same time one of Calvin's own works which had been lent him by the author, with some criticisms upon it marked on the margin in language that appears to have been more honest than complimentary.

The contents of the 'Christianismi Restitutio,' coupled with the not altogether uncalled-for indignation at the manner in which his own work had been handled, roused the soul of Calvin to almost ungovernable fury. And it is now, most probably for the first time, that the temptation to rid himself of his hated opponent by an unjust death appears to have assailed him. He resisted the temptation at first. He would rather not visit Servetus; he hopes that Servetus may never again appear before him, lest, in a moment of fury, the sight of him should madden him into doing an action of which he would afterwards repent.

There is a letter still extant, written at this time by Calvin to a friend of his, in which he says:—

'Servetus wrote to me lately, and beside his letter sent me a great volume full of his ravings, telling me with audacious arrogance that I should there find things stupen-

dous and unheard of till now. He offers to come hither if I approve; but I will not pledge my faith to him; for did he come, if I have any authority here, I should never suffer him to go away alive.'

Calvin refused to return to Servetus the manuscript copy of the 'Christianismi Restitutio,' whether out of a mere spiteful wish to annoy the Spaniard, or, as is more probably the case, that he believed the retention of it would be of service to him in bringing the opinions of his enemy into question, we are not able to say. But Servetus had been wise enough not to entrust the care of his manuscript to the honesty of the Reformer without having previously made a copy of it for himself. And this copy he now determined to have printed and sent abroad to the world. Here he had to encounter some difficulty, for the opinions it contained were so unorthodox that the publishers were frightened to undertake it, lest their own orthodoxy should be called into question. At last, by dint of bribing with a gratuity of one hundred crowns, in addition to taking the whole expense of the publication on himself, and by sacredly promising that he would do his best to prevent the name of the publisher from being disclosed to the world, Servetus was fortunate to find a man of the name of Arnoullet who would undertake his work; and in a brief space of time a thousand copies were duly printed and given to the world. The intention of the work is described in the introduction.

'The task we have set ourselves here,' runs the preface, 'is truly sublime, for it is no less than to make God known in His substantial manifestations by the Word, and His divine communication by the Spirit, both comprised in Christ, through whom alone do we learn how the divineness of the Word and the Spirit may be apprehended in man. Hidden from human sight in former times, God is now both manifested and communicated to the world: manifestations taking place by the Word, communication

by the Spirit, to the end that we may see Him face to face as it were in Creation, and feel Him intuitively but lucidly declared in ourselves. It is high time that the door leading to knowledge of this kind were opened, for otherwise no one can know God truly, read the Scriptures aright, or be a Christian.'

Towards the conclusion of the introduction Servetus gives earnest utterance to a fervent prayer, in which he beseeches Christ to allow his book to be the means of restoring Christianity to its original purity and truth :—

'Oh, Christ Jesus, Son of God, Thou who wast given to us from heaven, Thou who in Thyself makest Deity visibly manifest, I, Thy servant, now proclaim Thee, that so great a manifestation may be known to all. Grant, then, to Thy petitioner Thy good Spirit and Thy effectual Speech; guide Thou his mind and his pen, that he may worthily declare the glory of Thy Divinity, and give pious utterance to the faith concerning Thee. The cause indeed is Thine, for by a certain divine impulse it is that I am led to speak of Thy Glory from the Father. In former days did I begin to treat of this, and again do I enter upon it, for now am I to be made known to the pious; now truly are the days complete, as appears from the certainty of the thing itself, and the visible signs of the times. The Light Thou hast said is not to be hidden, so woe to me do I not evangelise.

'It rests with thee, then, oh, Reader (concludes the preface), that thou show thyself well disposed towards Christ, even to the end, and that thou hear our subject discussed at length in words of truth without disguise.'

The doctrines of the 'Christianismi Restitutio' are little more than a development of those propounded in the 'Trinitatis Erroribus.' In combating the orthodox conception of the Trinity, Servetus displays even more earnestness in his latter work than in his former. 'If there were in eternity two incorporeal beings alike and equal, then

were these Twins rather than a Father and Son; and were a third Entity added, like and equal to the other two, then were a threefold Geryon produced.'

The doctrine of the perdition of unbaptised infants is also forcibly combated :—

'The little children, whom Christ blessed, were not baptised. How should the most clement and merciful Lord condemn those who had never sinned? Did He ever say to the little ones unbaptised: Go ye accursed into everlasting fire? How should He curse those whom He blessed? They seem to attempt to befool me who say that the salvation of an unconscious infant depends on my will to baptise it or to leave it unbaptised. Pædobaptism is a detestable abomination, an extinction of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, a dissolution of the Church of Christ, a confusion of the whole Christian faith, an innovation whereby Christ is set aside and His kingdom trodden under foot. Woe to you, ye baptisers of infancy, for ye close the kingdom of heaven against mankind—the kingdom of heaven into which ye neither enter yourselves nor suffer others to enter. Woe! woe!'

Against the doctrine of Transubstantiation, too, Servetus expresses himself in no measured terms :—

'I rather wonder,' says he, 'whether Satan was the circumcisor of common sense from the brains of those who of *bread* make *not-bread*, and in the stead produce a vendible *whiteness*; for these puny sacrificators, for a mouthful of whiteness given without wine, make us count out our money. To such degradation of mind are these men brought, that they call that the true body of Christ, which, in the whiteness they imagine, rats and dogs might devour. Never was there any such blindness as this among the Jews—blindness the more notable as the Papists say they are infallible. But as circumcision of the foreskin makes the Jew, and circumcision of the heart the Christian, so

does circumcision of the scalp the sham Jew, the papal sacrificial priest and slave of Anti-Christ.'[1]

In this book also Servetus continues to display his Pantheistic opinions. 'It is God,' he says, 'who gives its Esse or essential being to every existing thing, to inanimate creation, to living creatures in general, and to man in especial. As the essence of God is the Word, in so far as manifestation is made in the world, so, and in so far as communication is made, it is Spirit; manifestation and communication, however, being ever co-ordinate and conjoined. It is Spirit that is archetype, eternally present in God, from whom it proceeds.'

We must not forget to mention that it is in this book that Servetus (when illustrating or explaining some of his metaphysical positions) shows a knowledge of Anatomy that, for the age in which he lived, was strikingly correct. By some authorities it is even opined that Harvey was anticipated by Servetus in his discovery of the circulation of the blood.[2]

The 'Restoration of Christianity' concludes with the following prayer:—

'Almighty Father! Father of all mercy, free us miserable men from the darkness of death, for the sake of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, Jesus Christ, Thou Son of God, who died for us, help us, lest we perish! We, Thy suppliants, pray to Thee as Thou hast taught us, saying, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come; and do Thou, Lord, come! Thy bride the Church, praying in the Apocalypse, says Come! The spirits of Thy children praying here say Come! Let all who hear this pray and cry aloud, and with John exclaim, Come! Thou, who hast said, "I come quickly," wilt surely come, and with Thy coming put an end to Anti-Christ. So be it. Amen!'

[1] 'Servetus and Calvin,' by R. Willis, M.D., p. 221.

[2] This, however, has been somewhat called into question by Dr. Willis (see page 210). Dr. Draper, on the other hand, seems to consider that Servetus was certainly the pioneer, if not actually the anticipator, of Harvey. (See 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. ii. p. 285.)

From the above extracts from his works it will be seen that Servetus was an earnest, pious mystic, inoffensive in himself, yet causing offence by the very unguarded language into which he so frequently allowed himself to be betrayed.

All this time Calvin's anger against Servetus had not been growing cooler, and when he discovered that the Spaniard had actually dared to publish 'the great volume full of his ravings' he was determined no longer to keep silence, but to betray Servetus into the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities. A heretic himself, it was difficult for him to accuse a fellow-heretic of anything that would be thought worthy of punishment by the Papacy. He therefore had recourse to artifice :—Living at this time in Geneva was a friend of Calvin's, a certain William Trie, a native of Lyons, and a convert from the Romish to the Reformed faith. Trie, in his turn, had a relation living at Lyons, a rigid Catholic, Arneys by name, who did not cease from reproaching his relative with his apostacy, and exhorting him to return to the faith of his fathers. Calvin, therefore, bethought himself that if this rigid Catholic relative of his friend's once got wind of the published doctrines of Servetus, the Spaniard would have but a very short time to remain in this world, for he would be quickly sent to the stake as an apostate from the Catholic faith. He therefore either wrote himself to Arneys, assuming the name of Trie, or else Trie wrote the letter at Calvin's dictation. Either way, the letter was sent at the instigation of, if not actually penned by, Calvin, and, unfortunately for Servetus, proved as successful as Calvin, in his bitterest moments, could have desired.

'A certain heretic is countenanced among you,' runs part of the letter, 'who ought to be burned alive, wherever he might be found. And when I say a heretic I refer to a man who deserves to be as summarily condemned by the Papists as he is by us. For, though differing in many

things, we agree in believing that in the sole essence of God there are three persons, and that His Son, who is His Eternal Wisdom, was engendered by the Father before all time, and has had imparted to him His Eternal Virtue, which is the Holy Spirit. But when a man appears who calls the Trinity we all believe in a Cerberus and Monster of Hell; who disgorges all the villanies it is possible to imagine against everything Scripture teaches of the eternal generation of the Son of God, and mocks besides, open-mouthed, at all that the ancient doctors of the Church have said—I ask you in what regard you would have such a man? I must speak freely: Is it not a shame that such persons are not put to death—and that in no simple and easy way—but cruelly burned alive? Nevertheless there is one among you who calls Jesus Christ an idol; who would destroy the foundations of the faith; who condemns the baptism of little children, and calls that rite a diabolical invention. He is a Spanish-Portuguese, Michael Servetus by name, though he now calls himself Villeneuve, and practises as a physician. He lived for some time at Lyons, and now resides at Vienne, where one of the books containing his heresies was printed. That you may not think I speak by mere hearsay, I send you the first few leaves as a sample, for your assurance. You say that our books, which contain nothing but the purity and simplicity of Holy Scripture, infect the world, yet you brew poisons among you which go to destroy the Scriptures and all you hold as Christianity. I need not, I imagine, go into particulars; I only pray you to put it somewhat seriously to your conscience, and conclude for yourself, to the end that, when you appear before the Great Judge you may not be condemned.—(Signed) Guillaume Trie. Geneva, 26th July, 1553.'

Dr. Willis seems to think that there can be no doubt that it was Calvin, and not Trie, who was the author of this epistle; and this view is certainly borne out by the

subsequent conduct of Calvin with reference to the prosecution of Servetus.

Arneys, upon reception of the letter signed from Guillaume Trie, immediately communicated with the clergy of Lyons, who in their turn informed Ory, a trained Inquisitor from Rome, of the writings and whereabouts of Servetus. By some means or other, too, the name and dwelling of the publisher Arnoullet transpired; and the consequence was that (a solemn Council having been convened) the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons and the Archbishop of Vienne, with the concurrence of the whole assembly, gave orders for the arrest of Michel Villeneuve, physician, and Balthasàr Arnoullet, bookseller, to answer for their faith on certain charges and informations to be laid against them.

No hero, no willing martyr, was our poor Servetus. He was only a pious, earnest mystic, with enough of human nature in him to render him very genuinely averse to suffering death by the stake. When he was brought before the court a certain bewilderment, if not an absolute terror, seems to have come upon him, and forced him into subterfuges which were unworthy of him, but which nevertheless were more creditable to his heart than to his understanding. For the subterfuges to which he had recourse were so lame, the excuses he employed were so palpably false, that it was obvious the simple, guileless Spaniard had neither the genius nor the experience requisite for the successful fabrication of clever falsehood. When shown some of the letters he had written some ten years before to Calvin—letters which had been penned in the strictest confidence, but now dishonourably betrayed by the Reformer to the Council and authorities—he could only stammer forth that he had not written them. When it was proved to him to be beyond the possibility of denial that the handwriting was his, he then declared he no longer held the same opinions, that he

would retract whatever was not in accordance with the tenets of the Church. When asked if he were not Servetus, the author of the heretical book on Trinitarian error, written some twenty years before, he declared he was not; when it was proved to him that the signature of *Servetus* and *Villeneuve* were in one and the same hand, he almost sobbed out that he was then but personating Servetus, whom he believed to be a Spaniard, but of whose dwelling and connections he was perfectly ignorant.

So ended the first day of the trial. Little hope did there seem for Servetus! His subterfuges, his dissimulations were so palpably false, so easily to be seen through, that he might as well have held his tongue. Even his friends—and he had many among the judges and authorities—perceived that it would be impossible to acquit him upon so very unsatisfactory a mode of defence.

Yet there were two things that were in the favour of Servetus. The first consisted of the numerous friends, high up in authority, that the Spaniard possessed; the second, the dislike and strong disapprobation with which the conduct of Calvin was viewed by all the more honourable members among the Council and authorities. If the friends of Servetus wished his release for his own sake, no less did the enemies of Calvin desire it for the sake of mortifying and checkmating the desires of that Reformer. A plot was therefore arranged by means of which Servetus should be enabled to effect his escape; and that this plot was sanctioned by the majority of those in authority is shown by the fact that the gaoler was not dismissed, scarcely even censured, for his apparent carelessness, and that Arnoullet, the publisher, was set at liberty without further investigation.

Servetus, on his escape from prison, wandered about from place to place for three or four months, and then took refuge in Geneva, at which place (being a Protestant city) he thought he should be tolerably free from all danger of

the Inquisition. He was aware, nevertheless, that that city was strongly under the influence of Calvin, and therefore deemed it wiser to assume some incognito and live as quietly and unostentatiously as possible. For this reason, also, he entered Geneva on foot, considering that by such a mode of entrance he would be less likely to attract attention than he would have been had he entered it on horseback.

Meanwhile, Calvin had placed spies in all the places he thought most likely to be visited by Servetus. And one Sunday evening, when the simple Spaniard incautiously went to a church, he was recognised there by one of these spies, who immediately communicated the intelligence to Calvin. In spite of the sacredness of the day the Reformer, on the reception of the welcome news, instantly denounced his victim to one of the Syndics, and demanded his immediate arrest. The accredited officer, armed with a warrant, sought and found Servetus, seated quietly and unsuspectingly in one of the rooms at the inn where he dwelt. The unfortunate Spaniard was briefly informed by the official that he was to consider himself a prisoner, and before he had time to recover from his surprise, he found himself led away, and thrown into the common gaol of the town.

On the occasion of this new trial Servetus did not allow himself to be betrayed into his former dissimulations and subterfuges. Whether it were that he deemed it likely that his punishment would be less severe in a Protestant than in a Catholic country, or whether his conscience would not allow him to yield a second time to the temptation of falsehood and equivocation, certain it is that to the majority of the charges brought against him Servetus answered openly and honestly. He equivocated somewhat when questioned as to the name of his publisher. Yet, as he had sacredly promised Arnoullet he would do his best to prevent his name from transpiring to the world, he naturally felt

himself bound in honour to do his utmost in the redemption of his promise. But on all the other counts it is evident Servetus was more honest, less bewildered and terrified, than on the occasion of his trial at Vienne. When interrogated as to his name and condition he answered at once that, though he had been living for some years under the name of Villeneuve, yet his real name was Michael Servetus; that he was a Spaniard by birth and a physician by profession. When questioned as to the authorship of the heretical book on the Trinity, he named himself as its author, maintaining that in writing this book he was thereby proving himself to be a follower of Christianity as it was in its earlier and purer days; for, prior to the Council of Nicæa, no Doctor of the Church had ever made use of the word Trinity. When asked if he had ever written to, or spoken of, Calvin in very disrespectful terms he acknowledged that he had done so, but added that Calvin had addressed him in similar language, and that it was no unusual, certainly no criminal action, for men in the heat of argument to be betrayed into violent and unguarded expressions. He and Calvin both agreed in accepting the Holy Scriptures as an ultimate test of authority (he continued): why not allow them to dispute and argue their differences in public? And then the court would be able to decide whether the opinions of himself or of Calvin most nearly approximated to the doctrines of Holy Writ.

To this request the court would not accede, for which refusal the most far-sighted of Servetus' own friends were grateful, knowing full well that the misty, at times even incomprehensible, style of the Spaniard would stand but a very poor chance compared with the clear, caustic, acute method of the Reformer.

When questioned as to the Pantheism inherent in his doctrines Servetus acknowledged the justice of the charge, declaring that in his belief 'all things, all creatures, are portions of the substance of God.' Calvin was in the court

at the time of this reply, and we have his own statement as to how he answered him: 'Annoyed as I was by so palpable an absurdity, I answered, "What! poor man, did one stamp on this floor with his foot, and say he trod on God, would you not be horrified at having subjected the majesty of God to such unworthy usage?" He on this replied, "I have not a doubt but that this bench, this table, and all you can point to around us is of the substance of God." When it was then objected to him that, on such shewing, the Devil must be of God substantially, he, smiling, impudently said, "Do you doubt it? For my part," continued he, "I hold it as a general proposition that all things whatsoever are part and parcel of God, and that Nature at large is His substantial manifestation."'

Many more interrogations of a like character were put to Servetus, but he answered them all clearly and fully; at the same time firmly maintaining in his own defence that he had written nothing that was contrary to the spirit of Christ, or to the letter of Holy Writ. He acknowledged that his doctrines were opposed to the dogmas of the Catholic Church, but they were not opposed to the teaching of Christianity, and (he could not help declaring with some bitterness) he believed that had it not been for the vindictiveness of his enemy, Calvin, he would never have been taken prisoner in a city holding the tenets that were then held by the City of Geneva.

Urged on by Calvin, yet scarcely knowing what to lay hold of in the doctrines of Servetus, the Council of Geneva at last determined to write to the Popish authorities of Vienne, demanding information as to the grounds on which Michael Servetus of Villanova had been imprisoned and prosecuted, and how he had managed to escape from confinement. After three days' delay the Catholic Church at Vienne sent back her haughty answer:—She could not stoop to give information to Protestant heretics about a prisoner of her own. She merely forwarded duplicates of

the warrant of arrest and sentence of death passed upon the said Villeneuve, demanding the delivery of that individual into her own hands, in order that the sentence passed upon him might be carried into effect, engaging that it should be of such a sort as to make any search for further charges against him unnecessary.

When Servetus heard that there was a chance of being sent back to Vienne some of his former terror seems to have returned to him; he fell on his knees, entreating to be judged by the Council then sitting in presence, and begging in the most piteous terms not to be sent to Vienne, where he knew the faggots and stake were in readiness for his arrival. The Council of Geneva, who (to its honour be it said), whenever they could rise superior to the influence of Calvin, were anxious to spare their consciences the crime of bloodshed, granted this request, and refused to deliver Servetus into the hands of the Catholic authorities, deciding that before they took any final steps they would consult the Councils and Churches of the four Protestant Cantons as to what should be done with their prisoner.

A certain delay, of course, was necessary, in order that the Church of Geneva should be able to carry out her designs; yet we think that the many weary weeks that were wasted before the Council would come to any definite conclusion showed a delay that was not only needless but almost unpardonable, and proved that the authorities were either reckless or thoughtless of the misery they were entailing upon a man of gentle birth, and accustomed to the amenities of life, by confining him in the common gaol of the town.

On September 15, 1553, the unfortunate Servetus writes the following letter:—

'My most honoured Lords,—I humbly entreat of you to put an end to these great delays, or to exonerate me of the criminal charge. You must see that Calvin is at his wits' end, and knows not what more to say, but for his

pleasure would have me rot here in prison. The lice eat me up alive; my breeches are in rags, and I have no change—no doublet, and but a single shirt, in tatters.'

On October 10 he writes again :—

'Most noble Lords,—It is now about three weeks since I petitioned for an audience, and still have no reply. I entreat you for the love of Jesus Christ not to refuse me that you would grant to a Turk, when I ask for justice at your hands. As to what you may have commanded to be done for me in the way of cleanliness, I have to inform you that nothing has been done, and that I am in a more filthy plight than ever. It is very cruel that I am neither allowed to speak, nor to have my most pressing wants supplied; for the love of God, Sirs, in pity or in duty, give orders in my behalf.'

'From your prison of Geneva.

'MICHAEL SERVETUS.'

All this time Calvin had not been idle. Perceiving, with distrust, the lull in the legal proceedings; fearful lest the combined authority of the Protestant Churches might haply take a lenient view of the Spaniard's offences, he was determined to gain the ear of the various Councils by vilifying Servetus to each of the principal pastors in authority.

To the pastor of Basle he wrote :—

'The name of Servetus, who, twenty years ago, infected the Christian world with his vile and pestilent doctrines, is not, I presume, unknown to you. Even if you have not read his book, it is scarcely possible that you should not have heard something of the kind of opinions he holds. He it is of whom Bucer, of blessed memory, that faithful minister of Christ, a man otherwise of gentle nature, declared that "he deserved to be disembowelled and torn in pieces." As in days gone by, so of late he has not ceased from spreading abroad his poison; for he has just had a

larger volume secretly printed at Vienne, crammed full of the same errors. The printing of the book having been divulged, however, he was thrown into prison there. Escaping from prison—by what means I know not—he wandered about in Italy for some four months; but driven hither at length by his evil destiny, one of the Syndics, at my instigation, had him arrested. Nor do I deny that I have been led by my office to do all in my power to restrain this more than obstinate and indomitable individual, so that the contagion should continue no longer. We see with what licence impiety stalks abroad, scattering ever new errors; and we have also to note the indifference of those whom God has armed with the sword to vindicate the glory of His name. If the Papists approve themselves so zealous and so much in earnest for their superstitions that they cruelly persecute and shed the blood of innocent persons, is it not disgraceful in Christian magistrates to shew so little heart in defending the assured Truth? But where there is the power of prevention there are surely limits to the moderation that suffers blasphemy to be vented with impunity.'

To the pastor of Neuchatel Calvin wrote:—'I say nothing of the effrontery of the man; but such was his madness that (in the course of the interrogatory) he did not hesitate to say the Devil was in the Deity! I hope the sentence will be capital at least.' To another pastor he wrote: 'The Council will send you ere long the opinions of Servetus in order to have your advice. It is in spite of us that you have this trouble forced on you; but the folks here have come to such a pass of folly and fury, that they are suspicious of all we say. Did I declare that there was daylight at noon, I believe they would question it.' From the above letter it is evident that Calvin was somewhat sore, and that his pride was hurt whenever it was brought to his remembrance that the Council of Geneva should have thought it necessary to consult the opinion of the

other Reformed Churches, instead of being content with the authority of himself.

Meanwhile Servetus had been employing the long, dreary time of waiting with making an abstract of his opinions, which abstract he was unwise enough to compile in the form of a letter to Calvin. We will quote the letter, partly, because the earlier portion of it is a complete and, for him, fairly lucid statement of his Pantheistic opinions; secondly, because the latter portion is a very fair specimen of the heavy, obscure style it was so frequently his habit to adopt:—

'To John Calvin, health! It is for your good that I tell you you are ignorant of the principles of things. Would you now be better informed, I say the great principle is this: *all action takes place by contact.* Neither Christ nor God Himself acts upon anything which He does not touch. God would not in truth be God were there anything that escaped His contact. All the qualities of which you dream are imaginations only, slaves of the field as it were. But there is no virtue of God, no grace of God, nor anything of the sort in God which is not God Himself; neither does God put qualities into aught in which He Himself is not. All is from Him, by Him, and in Him. When the Holy Spirit acts in us, therefore it is God that is in us—that is in contact with us, that actuates us.

'In the course of our discussion I detect you in another error. To maintain the force of the old law you quote Christ's words when he asks, "What says the law?" and answers himself by saying, "Keep the Commandments." But here you have to think of the law not yet accomplished, not yet abrogated; to think further, that Christ, when He willed to interpose in human things, willed to abide by the law; and that he to whom He spoke was living under the law. Christ, therefore, properly referred at this time to the law as a master. But afterwards, all things being accomplished, the newer ages were emancipated from the

older. For the same reason it was that He ordered another to shew himself to the priest and make an offering. Shall we, therefore, do the like? He also ordered a lamb and unleavened bread to be prepared for the Passover. Shall we too make ready in this fashion? Why do you go on Judaising in these days with your unleavened bread? Ponder these things well, I beseech you, and carefully read over again my twenty-third letter. Farewell.'[1]

It is probable that about this time some of the Spaniard's numerous friends found occasion to inform and warn him of the manner in which Calvin was secretly vilifying him to the various Protestant authorities; for the soul of Servetus seems all of a sudden to be filled with an indignation against the Reformer that was almost ungovernable, and forced him on to writing a letter which, practically, might be considered tantamount to the signing of his own death-warrant. It was nothing less than addressing a letter to the Syndics and Council of Geneva, accusing the man by whom he was himself accused, and demanding that the Reformer should be tried for calumny and false witness, and put into prison until a full investigation of his conduct had been made. Nothing but the most overpowering indignation could have deluded Servetus into imagining that a helpless, confined prisoner like himself, could have any weight in bringing to justice a man who, in the City of Geneva, where they both were, was regarded with feelings of little less awe and respect than was felt by the Catholic towards the Pope. Indeed, throughout the whole of this Genevese trial indignation appears to have been the predominant feeling in the breast of Servetus. In the trial at Vienne he was terrified, bewildered, but not so indignant. He knew that he had written against the Papacy; he was conscious that he had ridiculed the doctrine of the Transub-

[1] From Mosheim's *Neue Nachrichten, Beilagen*, S. 102, copied from the archives of the Church of Zurich, and quoted by Dr. Willis in his 'Servetus and Calvin,' pp. 423, 424.

stantiation, and therefore felt that, from the Catholic point of view, it was only natural that he should be taken to task for these offences. But in this Protestant City of Geneva, where the authority of the Holy Scriptures was employed as the ultimate test, and where, moreover, the individual interpretation of these Scriptures was conceded as a right to private judgment, Servetus could not help feeling that in a city holding tenets such as these, his imprisonment was a gross act of injustice, that it was not dictated by any motives of piety, or in the supposed defence of true religion, but solely by the vindictiveness of the man whom he was now beginning to regard with feelings of almost equal hatred as he himself was regarded by that Reformer—his enemy John Calvin.

It is needless to say that this accusation of his accuser by Servetus was passed over by the authorities with silent contempt. If it had any effect at all, it was only to make the doom of the Spaniard more dreadful and more speedy than it would otherwise have been. Yet it scarcely needed any fresh offence on the part of Servetus to render his punishment certain. Calvin had played his game too well for that. The various pastors, having received and duly weighed the letter sent to each of them by Calvin, came to the resolution of finding Servetus guilty of all the charges brought against him ; and this decision, though not quite unanimous, was nevertheless assented to by the larger proportion of the principal authorities throughout the four Protestant Cantons. The resolution was couched in the following terms :—

'Having a summary of the process against the prisoner, Michael Servetus, and the reports of the parties consulted before us, it is hereby resolved, and, in consideration of his great errors and blasphemies, decreed, that he be taken to Champel, and there burned alive; that this sentence be carried into effect on the morrow, and that his books be burned with him.'

The sentence took the unfortunate Servetus entirely by surprise. Throughout the whole of this Genevese trial he never seems to have imagined that his punishment would have amounted to one of death. Banishment from the Republic of Geneva was the very worst he ever apprehended. And when he was informed that the Protestant authorities had decided to visit him with precisely the same punishment he had so much dreaded from the Catholic authorities of Vienne he seemed almost beside himself with anguish. He groaned and sighed, sobbing out in his native language, '*Misericordia, misericordia!*'

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon of October 27, 1553, various officials entered the gaol of their prisoner, and desired him to accompany them, and hear his sentence solemnly pronounced by the councillors and justices of Geneva. He rose silently and sadly in obedience to their behests, but listened with greater calmness than was expected, while the long list of his offences was read over to him. When it was concluded the final sentence was solemnly pronounced:—

'In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we now pronounce our final sentence, and condemn thee, Michael Servetus, to be bound and taken to Champel, and there, being fastened to a stake, to be burned alive, along with thy books, printed as well as written by thy hand, until thy body be reduced to ashes. So shall thy days end, and thou be made an example to others who would do as thou hast done. And we command you, our Lieutenant, to see this our sentence carried forthwith into execution.'

The staff, according to the custom, was then broken over the prisoner, and for a few moments profound and gloomy silence prevailed.

Then the unfortunate Servetus lifted up his voice, entreating his judges to permit his death to be one of a less painful character than that by burning. 'He feared,' he said, 'that through excess of suffering he might prove faithless to him-

self, and belie the convictions of his life. If he had erred, it was in ignorance; he was so constituted, mentally and morally, as to desire the glory of God, and had always striven to abide by the Scriptures.'

It was in vain, however! His judges would not listen to his appeal couched in such piteous terms. Although, in justice to that Reformer, it must be admitted that, just at the last, Calvin did try and get the sentence of burning commuted to one of beheadal. But it was too late for him to wish to be merciful now, He had deliberately set light to a fire, had kindled it and rekindled it, had fanned it into flames whenever there seemed to be a chance of it dying out; and he had now to discover, as so many have discovered before and since himself, that it is not so easy to extinguish a great fire as it is to set it alight.

As the unfortunate Spaniard proceeded to the place of execution various of the officials surrounding him pressed him—some out of worthy, others out of unworthy motives—to relent and confess his sins. But he kept firm to the end, merely replying, 'I have done no wrong; I have performed no action deserving death; nevertheless I pray God to forgive my enemies and persecutors.' When he came in sight of the fatal pile he broke out into the most piteous ejaculations, calling on the name of God, and then prostrated himself on the ground absorbed in earnest prayer. Then the executioner seized upon him; he was bound to the stake with an iron chain; his two books—the one in manuscript sent in confidence to Calvin seven years before, and a copy of the one lately printed in Vienne—were then fastened to his waist, and his head was derisively decorated with a chaplet of straw bestrewed with brimstone.

'The deadly torch,' says Dr. Willis,[1] 'was then applied to the faggots and flashed in his face; and the brimstone catching and the flames rising, wrung from the victim such

[1] 'Servetus and Calvin,' p. 487.

a cry of anguish as struck terror into the surrounding crowd. After this he was bravely silent; but the wood being purposely green, although the people aided the executioner in heaping the faggots upon him, a long half-hour elapsed before he ceased to shew signs of life and suffering. Immediately before giving up the ghost, with a last expiring effort, he cried aloud, "Jesus, Thou Son of the eternal God, have compassion upon me." All was then hushed, save the hissing and crackling of the green wood; and by and by there remained no more of what had been Michael Servetus but a charred and blackened trunk and a handful of ashes.'

The account that Dr. Draper gives of the Spaniard's death is even more painful:—[1]

'For two hours was he roasted in the flames of a slow fire, begging for the love of God that they would put on more wood, or do something to end his torture.'

So ends a page in the history of Protestantism, demonstrating a spirit equally cruel, equally bigoted, and, from its own point of view, far more unjust than is exhibited in any similar page from Catholic history. Nevertheless, Protestantism may still be said to have this advantage over Catholicism:—The death of Servetus was an accident of the faith, so to speak, an isolated example, arising from the vindictiveness of an individual, not from the dogmas of the religion. And that individual was subsequently regarded with so much suspicion and dislike that he had to lower his haughty bearing, and plead in his own defence for the wicked deed of which he had been guilty, before those by whom he had been previously regarded as a sort of Pope or spiritual sovereign. The *auto-da-fés* of the Inquisition, on the other hand, were no accident, they were a habit, a system, for which its disciples never stooped, or indeed thought necessary, to apologise.

The doctrines of Servetus expired almost with himself.

[1] 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. ii. p. 226.

His style was too misty and incomprehensible to have many followers. In the words of Mosheim:—[1]

'Servetus' projected restoration of the Church, of which he hoped to be himself the author, died with him. For, notwithstanding public fame ascribes to him many disciples, and not a few divines of our age pretend to have great apprehension from the *sect of Servetus*, yet it may be justly doubted whether he left behind him one genuine disciple. Those who are called "Servetians," or followers of the doctrine of Servetus, by various writers, differ widely from Servetus in many respects; and, in particular, they entertain very different opinions from his respecting the doctrine of the Divine Trinity. Valentin Gentilis of Naples, whom the Government of Berne put to death in 1556, did not hold the opinions of Servetus, as many writers affirm; neither did Gribaldus Tellius and others who are sometimes numbered among the followers of Servetus, and it is not at all probable that any one of these regarded Servetus as his master. Peter Gonesius, who is said to have introduced the errors of Servetus into Poland, although he may have taught some things akin to them, yet explained the most sacred mystery of the Trinity in a very different manner from Servetus.'

[1] Mosheim's 'Ecclesiastical History,' vol. iii. pp. 589–590.

CHAPTER IV.

GIORDANO BRUNO.

IT is a noteworthy, perhaps, indeed, a suggestive fact, that that science which is apparently the most religious, and which is certainly the most ennobling—namely, the science of Astronomy—was yet the earliest of all the sciences to render the minds of thoughtful men prone to founder upon the rock of infidelity. Not that the teaching of astronomy is in reality more opposed to the teaching of the Church than is that of geology or biology, but simply because it was the first in order of time to arrive at any degree of perfection or exactitude. It came into existence, almost indeed into maturity, at an earnest, pregnant stage of the world's history, when revealed religion was something more than a mere half-belief and makeshift, but was felt to be a solemn, all-important fact, firmly believed to be God-given, therefore incapable of doubt. Men had not learnt the art of content with inconsistencies; they were as yet incapable of quiet acquiescence in self-contradictory statements; and they would have been unable to comprehend the mental standpoint of the distinguished physicist of whom it is related: 'When he went into his laboratory he shut the door of his oratory; when he went into his oratory he shut the door of his laboratory.' The Bible was believed to be the Word of God; therefore, as the Word of God, void of all error. In such a work interpolations or errors of any description must be impossibilities. If it had been sufficiently important for God to reveal, surely it were equally important

for Him to protect and preserve. If, then, new sciences, fresh discoveries, contradicted the statements of the Bible, there could be but one of two conclusions: either the sciences must be erroneous and the discoveries false, or else the Bible was not revealed by God. It was impossible to believe that any revelation—coming straight and direct from God—could be capable of errors creeping into it.

We find, then, Religion and Science in a state of utter antagonism. It was war to the knife. There were to be no half-measures; and Religion, relying upon her numerical superiority, was determined to forcibly eject Science from the field. Nay, if possible, she would prevent her from ever venturing even to enter upon it.

The first rock of contention was more geographical than astronomical, and concerned the shape and size of the earth. Is the earth a flat surface, bordered on every side by the waters of the sea, and roofed on high by the heavens as a sort of ceiling; or is it a round globe, as its shadow thrown during the eclipse of the moon would seem to lead us to infer? For many centuries there had been here and there isolated stragglers in the world of science who held the latter theory. But their number was so insignificant, and their opinions were put forward so timidly and hypothetically, that the Church was scarcely, if at all, alarmed.

It was not till the year 1520 that Magellan, feeling theoretically assured of the globular form of the earth, was determined to be no longer content with mere speculation and hypothesis, but decided to put his own theory to the proof by sailing round the earth. He resolved to effect an entire circumnavigation; and if the fruit of his expedition proved as great as its promise, the globular form of the earth need no longer be put forward timidly and hypothetically, but would rank and take its place amongst the catalogue of ascertained and verifiable facts. There is no need for us to dwell long upon the wonderful voyage of Magellan. We have all of us read of it; we are all familiar

with it. We have all heard of his troubles and difficulties, and the heroic patience with which he endured them. We have all been told of the means by which he endeavoured to support his sometimes failing courage; how he reminded himself of the reasonableness of his own theory; how he encouraged himself with remembering that 'though the Church had evermore from Holy Writ affirmed that the earth should be a widespread plain bordered by the waters, yet I comforted myself when I considered that in the eclipses of the moon the shadow cast of the earth is round; and as is the shadow such is the substance.' We all know that though not fortunate enough to complete his circumnavigation himself (being, as is supposed, basely murdered in a mutiny of his men), yet his intention was fully carried out by his first lieutenant, Sebastian d'Elcano, who was rewarded with honours such as kings alone can give. The globular form of the earth was thus ascertained, and placed in the region of indisputable fact. The Church could not gainsay it. All she could do was to bear her humiliation in silence, and be more cautious for the future. Her mistake had been in ever allowing the expedition to set forth. She should have compassed sea and land rather than have permitted a proceeding so fatal to her authority. Henceforth she would be more prudent. There was yet time for her to profit by that most pregnant, yet most difficult, of all lessons to learn—'Prevention is better than cure.'

But now Science, encouraged by her recent success, began to gird herself for a new problem, far more important, and, consequently, far more dangerous to the authority of the Church, than this last. What was the position of the earth in relation to the universe? Was she a solitary isolated world, with the sun, and moon, and stars created for her service in order to provide her with light and beauty, or was she but a small globe, whirling with other globes, some larger, some smaller than herself, round one central sun—in the position altogether of obedient or rather help-

less slaves, submissive to the sway of a despotic sovereign? From the time of Archimedes there had been at various and long intervals some few thinkers, more learned than their fellows, who believed in the rotation of the earth, and consequent subordination to the sun; but now the time was come for such an opinion to be removed from the category of mere speculation and theory, and placed in the much more exalted rank of ascertained and verifiable fact.

Copernicus, a Prussian, after long and ardent study, had come to the conclusion that the earth had a daily rotation on her axis, and an annual motion round the sun. He kept his work unpublished for thirty-three years, most probably for fear of angering the Church. At last, at the request of a Cardinal of the name of Schomberg, he consented to publish it. It is said that the old man received his first copy of it a few days before he died. Thus was he fortunate in that a natural and easy death removed him from the world before Superstition had had time to lay her cruel hand upon him. Six years after his death was born Giordano Bruno, a brief sketch of whom is the subject of this chapter.

Giordano Bruno first saw the light in the year 1550. He was born a few miles from Naples, at a place called Nola, midway between Vesuvius and the Mediterranean. He was of handsome gallant appearance, ardent, intrepid, somewhat given to the pleasures of the sense, uncertain in mood, endowed with a sort of restlessness and love of change, if not with an inclination to absolute freak. By no means, we should say, a very deep thinker; more a dialectician than a logician; at times reminding us of Abelard in his rhetorical ability, his restlessness and love of display, possibly also in his admiration for fair ladies; although, I believe, we are not justified in assuming that this admiration was anything more than a species of innocent gallantry; there is no reason for believing it ever attained to positive sensuality, as in the case of Abelard. He was very brave,

generous, and had an intense loathing of anything underhand or dishonest. In his youth he had adopted the garb of the Dominican monk; but religious doubts—more especially upon the doctrine of the Transubstantiation—assailed him, and he retained the office but for a very brief period.

Intrinsically and extrinsically, as we have said, the power of the Church was weakened. The movement of the Reformation was at its height. Christians were divided against themselves. The doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope was the war-cry of dissension; and the Christians who believed the dogma, and the Christians who disbelieved the dogma, were seen fighting against each other with a vindictiveness and hatred as great, if not greater, than they had ever evinced against the heathen. Added to this, there were a large number of men who were absolute, though unacknowledged, disbelievers in any form of revealed religion whatsoever. Such as believed in the globular form of the earth, still more, those who accepted Copernicus' theory of the movement and relative insignificance of the earth, were forced by logical necessity to deny, under the first belief, the infallibility of the Church, and under the second, not only the infallibility of the Church but, in addition, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. The globular form of the earth was absolutely against the teaching of the Church, and the movement, and relative insignificance of the earth were absolutely against the teaching of the Bible. As we remarked at the beginning of this chapter, men had not learnt the art of reconciling discrepancies and contradictory statements in the Bible by plausible pretexts of interpolations and mistranslations. It was not thought likely, or indeed possible, that God should have allowed errors to creep into a book which had been of sufficient importance for Him to have revealed. Such, therefore, as believed in the revelations of science disbelieved in the revelation of the Bible; and,

cæteris paribus, such as believed in the revelation of the Bible, and yet further such as, in addition, believed in the infallibility of the Pope, repudiated *in toto*, and utterly loathed the revelations of science. Yet there were few, if any, who openly acknowledged any distrust of the authenticity of Scripture. Sceptics, for the most part, were too frightened and too timid. Added to which, there was a certain want of depth and earnestness in the sceptical intellects at this period of the world's history which we fail to find at any other time, save perhaps in some few thinkers of the eighteenth century. There is nothing so degrading, so self-lowering as conscious imposition; yet such was the state in which a large majority of the best intellects then were. It was not that they stifled and silenced their consciences by refusing to examine unorthodox opinions, or by trying to 'believe that they believed,' as is so frequently the case in the present day. They simply disbelieved *in toto*, but for fear of the Church either kept their opinions to themselves, or else openly avowed a reverence they did not feel, at times not even shrinking from aiding and abetting in punishing men for professing opinions which in their own hearts they could not help feeling they themselves held to be true. Science, indeed, just in the time of Bruno was almost as much retarded by those who believed in her as by those who were opposed to her. The entire earnestness and depth of this latter half of the sixteenth century appeared to be monopolised by the unhappy Catholics and Protestants, whose chief expenditure of that earnestness seemed to be in fighting one against another. Whatever the faults, the bigotry and cruelty of these might have been, they were at least most earnest, most sincere. They died for their sincerity; they renounced wealth and lands, friends and children, honour and reputation for the doctrines they prized so much; and in such wise were an example to the disciples of Science, who, it must be confessed, were less conspicuous in courage and earnestness in

this latter half of the sixteenth century than they were either in its earlier half, or in the whole of the seventeenth. Bruno says wherever he went he found scepticism under the mask of religion; comprehension and secret acceptance of scientific truths under assumed disbelief and pretended repudiation. The dishonesty lashed him into fury. He was not so much a lover of science, he was not so much an antagonist of revealed religion, as he was an intense hater and utter despiser of falsehood and deceit. And, we imagine, it is probable that it was this strong reactionary feeling he experienced against the religionists which was the primary cause and origin of his becoming the apostle and subsequent martyr of science. We can scarcely conceive of him as a Zenophanes or St. Augustine. It is difficult to picture him meditating in absorbed abstraction upon the mysteries of existence, or trying to probe the difficulties presented by the intermixture of good and evil. He was more a man of action than a man of thought; and although it is true he was a student of science, he belonged to the militant more than to the thoughtful or passive side of it.

The only science at that time worthy even of being called a science was the science of astronomy, and to astronomy therefore Bruno devoted himself. He studied the theory of Copernicus, and to a poetic temperament such as the Italian's, where a love of grace and beauty was a pervading sentiment, that theory recommended itself with a sort of fascination, on account of its consistency and harmony. It is possible, too, that, with his generous impetuous disposition, the very fact of it having as yet gained so few disciples or supporters may have made him resolved to cherish it all the more ardently. Besides which, Bruno had not only a contempt but a positive dislike to the Aristotelian method, and was by no means displeased with the conviction that his acceptance of the Copernican theory would set him at war with the whole body of Peripatetics in all the academies of Europe.

In addition to Copernicus, Bruno studied Lucretius, and revived the notion of an infinity of worlds. He began to suspect that each of the fixed stars was a sun with planets whirling in probable attendance, as our earth does round her sun. But he went even further than this—he might almost be called a crude pioneer of the Evolution theory, for he believed that the processes of nature were not by sudden creative leaps, but by a very gradual growth and unfolding. In the words of Professor Tyndall:[1] 'Struck with the problem of the generation and maintenance of organisms, and duly pondering it, Bruno came to the conclusion that Nature in her productions does not imitate the technic of man. Her process is one of unravelling and unfolding. The infinity of forms under which matter appears were not imposed upon it by an external artificer; by its own intrinsic force and virtue it brings these forms forth. Matter is not the mere naked, empty *capacity* which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb.'

Yet it was the science of astronomy which chiefly engrossed Bruno, and at the basis of his astronomical beliefs lay his religious conviction. For Bruno was at heart a complete and entire Pantheist, and in accepting the theory of Copernicus, he was not merely satisfying his love of harmony and order, he was increasing and strengthening the depth of his religious emotions. 'These magnificent stars and shining bodies,' he exclaims, 'which are so many inhabited worlds, and grand living creatures, and excellent divinities, could not be what they are—could not have any permanent relation to each other—if there were not some cause or principle which they set forth in their operations, and the infinite excellence and majesty of which they with innumerable voices proclaim.' And elsewhere he speaks even more clearly. 'God,' he says, 'is the Infinite All;

[1] 'Belfast Address,' p. 19.

the prime and universal substance of Himself excludes all delimitation, and is not to be sought beyond the universe and the infinity of things, but within this and these; and this unity is the end and aim of all philosophy. Why think of any twofold substance, one corporeal, another spiritual, when in sum these have but one essence and but one root? For corporeal substance, which manifests or presents to us that which it involves, must be held a thing divine, parent of natural things: if you think aright, you will find a Divine Essence in all things.'

The works of Bruno are the *Cena delle Ceneri*, or Evening Conversations on Ash Wednesday, which is an apology for the Copernican astronomy; the *Spaccio della Bestia Trionfanti*, or Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast, which is a satirical, but somewhat heavy, allegory in the style of the period. His best works are generally supposed to be those which are metaphysical, such as the *Della Causa Prncipio ed Uno* (On the One Sole Cause of Things); and the *Del Infinito Universo e Mondi* (On the Infinity of the Universe and of Worlds).

As soon as he had arrived at manhood Bruno set himself to visit the principal cities of Europe, especially those of Geneva, Paris, and London. It was the society of the latter place that delighted him most, and he spent a considerable portion of his time there. The intellect of the English Queen, the grace and beauty of her ladies, the high breeding and courtesy of a Greville or a Sydney, all made him regard England with admiration and affection; and in *La Cena delle Ceneri* he dwells with evident pleasure upon the gratification his visit afforded him. It is only the flower of English aristocracy, however, which meets with his approval; he denounces, almost with bitterness, the manners both of the upper and lower middle classes. He declares he knows not which ought to be condemned the most—the beer-drinking propensities of the undergraduates, or the hopeless pedantry of their seniors. And

he owns himself obliged to confess that, during all his numerous travels, he never met with either country gentlemen, yeomen, tradesmen, innkeepers, or boatmen so completely ill-bred and savage as those in England.

The two works *La Cena delle Ceneri* and *Della Causa Principio ed Uno* were composed in this country; and as they tend to show very clearly the Pantheistic opinions of Bruno we will proceed to give a short abstract of the two books.

The first consists of five dialogues between Smitho, an Englishman; Teofilo, a philosopher; Prudentio, a pedant; and Frulla, a saucy personage, whose chief employment consists in making jests that are more or less unseemly. But it is the book *Della Causa Principio ed Uno* which more nearly concerns us. The former is concerned principally with two subjects—a lively description of anecdotes connected with London life, and an investigation into the Copernican theory, which Bruno cannot help feeling is strangely divergent from the Mosaic account; but is somewhat comforted in finding that the philosophy of Copernicus is much favoured in many passages of the Book of Job, which he describes as 'one of the most singular that can be read, full of all good theology, physics and morality, abounding in most wise discourses, united by Moses as a sacrament to the books of his Law.'

The *Principio ed Uno* is a sort of continuation of, or at all events, has a certain connection with, the *Cena Delle Ceneri*. The scene is still laid in England, and Teofilo again forms one of the *dramatis personæ*; the others being a countryman of ours, one Dixon, or, as he is called in Italian, *Alessandro Discono;* a pedant of the name of *Polyhymnio;* and *Gervasio*, who is apparently at the conference because he has nothing better to do. The dialogue is in reality almost entirely confined to Dixon and Teofilo—Dixon being the enquirer; Teofilo (who is most probably Bruno himself) being the teacher.

'What is the Efficient Cause?' asks Dixon.

'I affirm,' answers Teofilo, 'the physical universal efficient to be the Universal Intellect, which is the primary and principal faculty of the Soul of the World; that Soul being, on the other hand, the universal form of this Intellect.' 'This is that One which fills the great whole, which illuminates the universe, which directs Nature to produce its species in the way which is most suitable. So that it has the same relation to the production of *natural* things as our intellect has to the corresponding production of *rational* species. That which the Magians, Plato, Empedocles, and Plotinus called respectively the Impregnator, the Fabricator of the World, the Distinguisher, the Father or Progenitor, ought in reality to be called the Internal Artificer, seeing it forms the matter and the figure from within: from within the seed or the root it gives forth or unfolds the stem; from within the stem it forces out the boughs; from within the boughs it forces out the branches; from within these it pushes out the buds; from within it forms, shapes, and interlaces, as with nerves, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits; and from within, at appointed times, it recalls its moisture from the leaves and fruits to the branches, from the branches to the boughs, from the boughs to the stem, from the stem to the root. And there is a like method in the production of animals.' Then Dixon enquires, 'Surely you mean that it is only the entire universe taken as a whole that is animated? You cannot mean that every isolated thing—all the numberless forms whatsoever are found in nature—you cannot mean that all and every one of these have a vital principle?'

Teofilo admits that he cannot stop short of this conclusion. He holds that everything has within it an animating spirit.

'What!' exclaims Polyhymnio. 'You think my slippers, my boots, my spurs, my ring, and my cloak are animated?'

'Why not?' asks Gervasio. 'When you wear that cloak is there not an animal within that cloak? Do not your boots contain living feet?'

The pedant is greatly offended by this vulgar solution of a philosophical problem; and, turning to Teofilo, demands a more learned reason for the doctrine he has set forth.

'I admit,' answers Teofilo, 'that the table as table is not animated, nor the garment as garment, nor the skin as skin; yet as natural and composite things they have in them matter and form. Be the thing, then, as little as it may, it has in it a portion of spiritual substance, which, if it finds the fitting subject, may develop itself into a plant, into an animal—may acquire the members of any kind of body which in its totality is called animated; seeing that spirit is found in all things, and there is not the smallest corpuscle which does not contain within it that which animates it.'

'You would make me think,' replies Dixon, 'the opinions of Anaxagoras probable, who held that everything is in each thing, seeing that spirit, or life, or universal form being in the whole mass of things, from a whole a whole may be produced.'

'That doctrine,' answers Teofilo, 'I look upon not as probable, but as true. And if so, not only is life found in all things, but the soul is that which is the substantial form of all things; it presides over the matter, it holds its lordship in those things that are compounded; it effectuates the composition and consistency of their parts. This I understand to be the one in all things which, however, according to the diversity of the dispositions of matter, and according to the faculty of the material principle, active and passive, produces diverse configurations, and works out diverse faculties; one while showing the effect of life without sense, one while the effect of life and sense without intellect; one while how it may have all the faculties kept

down and repressed either by the imbecility or by some other condition of the matter. Whatever changes, then, of time or place anything may undergo, it cannot cease to be; the spiritual substance being not less in it than the material. The exterior forms alone are altered and annulled, because they are not things, but only appertain to things; they are not substances, but merely the accidents and circumstances of substances. The Sophists say that that is truly man which is the result of composition; that that is truly soul which is either the perfection and act of a living body or the result of a certain symmetry of complexion and members. Wherefore it is no marvel if they regard with such terror death and dissolution, seeing therein the overthrow of their being. Against which folly Nature cries with a loud voice, affirming that neither bodies nor souls ought to fear death, seeing that matter and form are both most constant principles.'

We must indulge ourselves in one more quotation from this work. It is from the fifth dialogue, and depicts in clear and striking language the Pantheistic opinions of Bruno:—

'The universe, then, is one, infinite, immovable. One, I say, is the absolute possibility, one the act, one the form or soul, one the matter or body, one the being, &c. Within the one infinite and immovable, which is substance, which is being, is found multitude and is found number. Yet all the modes and multiformity of being, whereby we are enabled to distinguish thing from thing, does not cause the being itself to be more than one. For if we reflect earnestly with the natural philosophers, leaving the logicians to their own fancies, we shall find that whatever causes differences or number is mere accident, mere figure, mere combination. Every production, of whatever sort it be, is an alteration, the substance ever remaining the same, for that is only one—one being, divine, immortal. Pythagoras was able to

understand that, instead of fearing death, he need only contemplate a change. All philosophers, commonly called physical, have perceived the same truth when they say that in respect of substance there is neither generation nor corruption, unless under these names we mean to signify alteration. Solomon understood this when he said that there was no new thing under the sun, but that which has been already. Understand, then, that all things are in the universe, and the universe in all things; we in that, that in us; and so all meet in one perfect unity. See, then, how vain a thing it is to torment the spirit with anxieties; see how impossible it is that there should be anything about us of which we ought to be fearful. For this unity is alone and stable, and ever remaineth. This One is eternal. Every appearance, every other thing is vanity, is as it were nothing; yea, all that is nothing which is outside of this One. Those philosophers have found again their mistress Sophia, or Wisdom, who have found this Unity. Verily and indeed wisdom, truth, and unity is the same.'

After leaving England Bruno went to Germany; in 1586 we find him at Wittenberg, the home of Luther. He was received here with the greatest cordiality; most probably on account of the admiration he was known to feel for that Reformer, whose memory, notwithstanding that he had been dead now some forty or fifty years, was still held in sacred and affectionate estimation by the good Wittenbergers. Bruno expressed, of course, no particular sympathy with the religious opinions of the Lutherans. The sole cause of his admiration of Luther lay in the honesty and courage he felt that the Reformer possessed in common with himself, and the dislike they mutually and equally evinced against the teaching of the Schoolmen. Bruno remained at Wittenberg some little time; and on leaving it declared in a public address his gratitude for the manner in which he had been received, concluding with an open

expression of his admiration for Luther, whose teaching, he believed, was now bearing fruit in the free and courageous spirit of the Wittenbergers.

An expression of admiration for Luther, delivered so publicly and ostentatiously, was a dangerous experiment in those bigoted times, and may be considered the beginning of those offences for which Bruno was afterwards so bitterly to be punished.

From Wittenberg he proceeded to Helmstadt, where he experienced the treatment that seemed generally to fall to his share; that is to say, he was received with the greatest cordiality by the princes, and a few of the principal members of the aristocracy; but was hated by the priests and doctors of the University. He was offered the tutorship of the son of the Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, upon the acceptance of which he was excommunicated by the chief of the clergy there; and afterwards, when his pupil reigned in his father's stead, Bruno added to the offences he had already committed by pronouncing an eulogy upon the virtues of the elder Duke.

As a supporter of the Copernican doctrine, and still more as an upholder of some very unorthodox religious opinions, Bruno was gradually becoming a known character throughout Europe. And just at the time when murmurings and questionings, which had hitherto been more or less insignificant, were growing into something of a more threatening and suspicious character, he had the imprudence to revisit Italy. He went first to the university town of Padua, but found his society there so exceedingly unwelcome to the inhabitants that he deemed it more prudent to considerably abbreviate his visit. He next directed his steps to Venice, trusting that he might be tolerably free from danger in a city which had more than once afforded protection to philosophers under suspicion of heresy. His confidence was doomed to disappointment, however. He found, to his dismay, that there was a prison existing there, which the

Venetians granted for the special service of the Inquisition, though the Council of Ten still retained its own dominion over the prisoners. And into this prison Bruno was thrown in the September of 1592.

The Grand Inquisitor of Rome was informed of Bruno's arrest, and solemnly demanded that the Venetian authorities should surrender him up to him, to be treated as the Inquisition should deem fit. The following reasons were assigned as qualifying him to be dealt with by the Inquisition and no other body: 'The prisoner is a confirmed heretic; he has openly praised the Queen of England and other heretic princes. He has taught the Copernican theory of the movement of the earth; he has written various treatises, in which he undermines religion and faith, though he seeks to disguise his doctrines in philosophical language. He is an apostate from the Dominican Order, of which he was formerly a member.'

For some reason or other, not yet known or comprehended, the Ten refused at first to accede to the demand of the Inquisition. Had they so acceded, we may well suppose they would almost have earned the gratitude and thanks of Bruno, for at least, in that case, his sufferings would have been but of very transient duration. As it was, he was imprisoned, kept under the closest confinement for over six years, deprived of books, paper, and pen. To anyone imprisonment so rigorous must have been bitterly difficult of endurance; to the restless, eager, impetuous mind of the Italian it must have been positive torture. Habituated as he had been to a life of vicissitudes—at one moment lapped in the luxury of a court, honoured, almost adored by the admiring appreciation of the fair; at another in hot, eager, not altogether unsolicited disputation with the schoolmen and doctors, the change to a life of dreary, monotonous sameness must have been of tenfold greater punishment than to one who had been accustomed to a duller and more unexciting life. At last the demands of

Rome were acceded to, and Bruno was removed to the precincts of the Inquisition. Yet even then his miseries were very far from completion. Two years more he was detained a prisoner at Rome.

At length the long, slow years of imprisonment are over, and he is told that the day has been fixed for his trial. He knows full well that this trial will be but a mock one; that his death had been already predetermined. But he fears neither death nor pain. He is glad to think his period of imprisonment is so quickly to be terminated; yet, as he leaves his prison for the court of examination, it is palpable to every beholder that, bitterly as he had felt his confinement, it had had no power to lower his courage, or daunt the intrepidity, almost, indeed, the haughtiness of his bearing.

On February 9, 1600, he enters the court with firm step, his head thrown back, his carriage erect. He listens with calm disdain as his offences are recounted. He had collected all the observations that had been made respecting the new star in Cassiopeia in the year 1572; he had taught that space is infinite; that it is filled with opaque and self-luminous worlds; and (worst offence of all!) he had declared his belief in the strong probability of these worlds being inhabited.

He is found guilty, and commanded to fall on his knees while his sentence of degradation and excommunication is being delivered. He is told that eight days will be allowed him for repentance and confession; but if at the end of that time he is still unrepentant he will be delivered over to the secular authorities to be punished 'as mercifully as possible, and without the shedding of his blood,' the atrocious formula for burning a man alive. When the abominable sentence was passed he merely replied, 'Perhaps it is with greater fear that ye pass this sentence upon me than I receive it.'

The eight days pass away; but, resolute to the end, no

fear of death, no dread of pain is capable of forcing him to a profession of belief that is not his. On the 17th of February his time is up, and he is led to his place of execution. One who believed the sentence to be just, and who watched the execution of it with satisfaction, owns that Bruno did not quail. A crucifix was held before him, but he refused to look upon it. He uttered not a groan. Not a murmur proceeded from his lips. He died as he had lived; and it is impossible to determine whether the bold activity of his life, or the calm fortitude of his death, displays the greater courage or heroism. As the flames shut him out from view his tormentors sarcastically observed that he had gone to the imaginary worlds he had so wickedly feigned.

'No one,' says Dr. Draper,[1] 'can recall without sentiments of pity the sufferings of those countless martyrs who, first by one party and then by another, have been brought for their religious opinions to the stake. But each of these had in his supreme moment a powerful and unfailing support. The passage from this life to the next, though through a hard trial, was the passage from a transient trouble to eternal happiness—an escape from the cruelty of earth to the charity of heaven. On his way through the dark valley the martyr believed that there was an invisible hand that would lead him, a friend that would guide him all the more gently and firmly because of the terrors of the flames. For Bruno there was no such support. The philosophical opinions for the sake of which he surrendered his life could give him no consolation. He must fight the last fight alone. Is there not something very grand in the attitude of this solitary man, something which human nature cannot help admiring, as he stands in the gloomy hall before his inexorable judges? No accusers, no witness, no advocate is present, but the Familiars of the Holy Office, clad in black, are stealthily moving about. The tormentors and the rack are in the vaults below. He

[1] 'Conflict between Religion and Science,' by J. W. Draper, p. 180.

is simply told that he has brought upon himself strong suspicions of heresy, since he has said that there are other worlds than ours. He is asked if he will recant and abjure his error. He cannot and will not deny what he knows to be true; and perhaps—for he had often done so before—he tells his judges that they, too, in their own hearts are of the same belief. What a contrast between this scene of manly honour, of unshaken firmness, of inflexible adherence to the truth, and that other scene, which took place more than fifteen centuries previously by the fireside in the hall of Caiaphas, the high-priest, when the cock crew and "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter"! And yet it is upon Peter that the Church has grounded her right to act as she did to Bruno.

'But perhaps the day approaches when posterity will offer an expiation for this great ecclesiastical crime, and a statue of Bruno be unveiled under the dome of St. Peter's, at Rome.'

CHAPTER V.

VANINI.

LUCILIO VANINI was born at Taurasano, a market-town in the kingdom of Naples. According to some authorities the date of his birth was the year 1585; according to others 1579. His father's name was John Baptista Vanini, steward to Don Francis de Castro, Duke of Taurasano, Viceroy of Naples, and afterwards Ambassador of Spain to the Court of Rome. Baptista appears to have been a man of rugged, dogged resolution, and by no means wanting in intellectual ability. His son relates an anecdote of him that was thoroughly characteristic. He says that his father, being near his end, and his physicians having acquainted him with the fact, he sprang out of bed, pronouncing these words of the Emperor Vespasian: 'It does not behove me to die otherwise than standing.' Lucilio's mother was called Beatrix Lopes de Noguera, and came of a Spanish family of distinction. Lucilio was a great lover of learning from his infancy, and applied himself with eager avidity to the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge. As he grew up to youth his father sent him to Rome for the completion of his education, where he studied principally philosophy and divinity. His tutor was a certain Carmelite friar called Barthelemi Argotti, a man famous for his great and varied learning. Lucilio was greatly attached to him, and considered himself singularly fortunate in the possession of such a man for his tutor. He frequently mentions him in his works and describes, with affectionate

remembrance, his sedate behaviour, his calm wisdom, and calls him 'a phœnix of the preachers of his time.' With nearly equal praise does he mention another Carmelite called John Bacon, 'an ornament to the Averroists, formerly my preceptor, and from whom I have learnt to swear by none but Averroes.'

From Rome he returned to Naples, where he continued his philosophical studies. He delighted much in natural philosophy, and applied himself also for a considerable space of time to the study of medicine. In addition to this he devoted himself with ardour to the science of astronomy. Yet none of these pursuits occupied so much of his time as did divinity. As soon as his education was completed he became a priest, and speedily attracted considerable attention by his gift of preaching. He became subsequently a student of the law, and on the title page of his 'Dialogues' he describes himself as *Doctor in utroque jure.* From Naples he went to Padua, where the purity of the air, the softness of the climate, and especially the companionship of men of letters, detained him for some years. He had little or no private fortune, and often found it a hard struggle to continue his beloved, but pecuniarily unprofitable, studies. But 'all is warm,' he says, 'to those that love; have I not sustained at Padua the greatest frost in winter with a poor and thin dress, animated only with a desire of learning?'

At last his labours were rewarded with the consciousness that he was really in the possession of sufficient learning to enable him to go through all Europe, to visit the universities, and assist at the conferences of the learned.

His favourite authors were Aristotle, Averroes, Cardan, and Pomponatius.

As to Aristotle his feeling for him attained to positive admiration. He calls him the God of Philosophy, the Dictator of human wisdom, and the Sovereign Pontiff of the sages.

The system of Averroes, which is in great measure founded upon that of Aristotle, was so much to his liking that he took care to recommend it to his disciples. 'When the business was,' says he, 'to initiate him into the mysteries of philosophy, I took great care that he swore to no one's name; I contented myself with putting into his hands Averroes's books, which he read with such greediness, and by which he profited so much, that he soon took upon him to confute the impertinences of the scholastics, who talk superficially upon matters.'

Pomponatius was a famous Averroist living about fifty years before Vanini. He left behind him at Padua many followers and several writings. Vanini always speaks of him as his 'divine master,' and bestows great encomiums upon his works. The book where he treats upon enchantments, and which was looked upon as a dangerous one, seemed to him a golden treatise—*Liber Aureus.* Another, upon Destiny, charmed him; and a third, about Causes and Effects, gained also his highest admiration. According to the statement of some authorities, Vanini believed that the soul of Averroes had transmigrated into the body of Pomponatius. If Vanini ever did make so exaggerated a statement, it is probable he was only speaking metaphorically.

Cardan was also one of those authors whom Vanini had studied much; but the praise he bestowed upon him was not quite the unadulterated eulogium he awarded the other three. He praises him, but also finds fault with him in several places. Cardan firmly believed in the truth of astrology, and had written a book almost amusing from its crude originality, entitled 'Jesus Christ's Horoscope.' Now, although Vanini could not shake himself completely free from all belief in astrology (as in that stage of the world's history it was very difficult for any student of astronomy to do) he nevertheless considered Cardan carried his credence in it to a foolish and superstitious extent.

In those days, it need scarcely be remarked, it was a

dangerous thing for men to venture to think for themselves; still more dangerous was it for them to openly express those thoughts. The few who did venture so to do generally did so under the cover of a mask or blind, so to speak. They would preface their opinions with ambiguous turns and phrases, such as: 'Were I not a Christian I should teach so and so.' 'Did not the doctrines of our holy Church prohibit me, I should be inclined to accept such and such tenets of philosophy,' &c. Descartes, living about this time, submits all his writings to the judgment of the Church; Vanini does likewise. Nor need it be thought that such acts necessarily display any spirit of peculiar cowardice or timidity. Had authors not been thus cautious their writings would never have become known at all. They would have been seized and burnt before there had been time for them to become disseminated and generally recognised; so that for the sake of their works, if not for themselves, it was necessary for philosophers to exercise caution. Nevertheless, this same caution renders it somewhat difficult for us to penetrate the ambiguity of many of these sixteenth and seventeenth century philosophers, and forces us to be somewhat diffident as to whether we have thoroughly mastered the spirit of their writings.

Amongst the number of these somewhat ambiguous writers must be counted Pomponatius and Cardan; yet, as they had considerable influence upon the writings of Vanini, it is necessary we should do our best to understand them. They had both written upon the Immortality of the Soul, apparently seeking to establish the doctrine; but in reality, we venture to think, opposing it. Pomponatius was the first to write upon this subject, prefacing his article by cautiously declaring his object in thus writing was to show that 'since it was impossible to prove the immortality of the soul by natural and philosophical reasons, the surest way was to have recourse to revelation.' In spite of this somewhat flimsy disguise, both Cardan and Pomponatius brought upon themselves a good deal of suspicion and evil

notoriety by certain passages in their several writings. The disaffected passage in Cardan was as follows:—

'Let us now see whether the belief in immortality makes men more virtuous or happy. As for my part, I do not perceive it contributes anything towards it. We see in Cicero and Diogenes Laertius that the Epicureans were more upright and honest, and had more true goodness towards men, than the Stoics or Platonics. The reason is, if I mistake not, that *men grow good or bad by custom.* But nobody trusts them who make no profession of an unshaken uprighteousness, and therefore they are obliged to observe more their honour than others, and to prove themselves such to the public, for fear men should think their practices are according to their sentiments. Hence it is that few men now-a-days equal the faith of usurers, which otherwise lead a very bad life. Let it be observed also that the sect of Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection and immortality of the soul, never ceased prosecuting Jesus Christ; and that the Sadducees, another sect, which rejected both these articles, attacked Him but very seldom, once or twice at most, and in such a manner that it caused Him no great uneasiness. Again, if you compare the lives of Pliny and Seneca—their lives, I say, and not their words—you will find that Pliny, with his belief of the mortality of the soul, surpasses Seneca in his moral behaviour as much as he (Seneca) surpasses Pliny in his discourse upon religion and virtue. The Epicureans cultivated honesty; they entertained very officiously the children of their pupils, and maintained at their charges the families of their deceased friends. They were looked upon everywhere as honest men, although they did not regard much the worship of the gods, and denied their existence very strongly. It happens also from that flattering opinion of another life that the wicked have room to exert their passions; the good suffer many things contrary to the welfare of society; and the laws sustain a considerable shock, inasmuch as

upon consideration of religion they are softened to such a degree that often the very foundations of the public good and the ease of mankind lies at stake. Neither does it seem to me that this belief of immortality makes men more courageous. For Brutus was no more so than Cassius; and, if we will say the truth, the actions of Brutus were rather more cruel than those of Cassius. For the last treated the Rhodians, although great enemies of the righteous cause, in a more favourable manner than Brutus had done the cities where he commanded, and which were in alliance with him. And, lastly, what shall we say? Is it not Brutus, the same Brutus the Stoic, who delivered the Republic into Anthony's hands, because he had saved it to no purpose, although according to law, after Cassius had rescued it by his good conduct?'

The passage in the essay of Pomponatius, nearly as open to condemnation as the one we have just quoted from Cardan, runs as follows:—

'I am very well persuaded that the doctrine of the mortality of the spirits doth not persuade men to be wicked, and that since they naturally love felicity and hate misery; to make them honest, it suffices to show them that the happiness of life consists in the practice of virtue, and misery in the practice of vice. Indeed, those who inculcate the mortality of the soul open a way to the most perfect virtue, which hath not in view any recompense or chastisement. Those men are brutal to whom the immortality of the soul must be proposed as a bribe. It is probable there have been authors who have taught that doctrine without believing it themselves, using it as a stratagem to restrain the sensual inclinations of brutal minds. It is not generally true that they are debauched people who establish the mortality of the soul; neither is it true they are all wise men who believe the immortality. For it is evident that abundance of ill livers have faith, but are led away by their passions; and, on the contrary, we know for certain that a

great number of wise and just men held the mortality of the soul. Plato tells us, in the first book of his "Republic," that the poet Simonides, an excellent and divine man in all respects, was of that number. Homer, according to Aristotle's observation in his "Treatise upon the Soul," made no distinction betwixt sense and understanding; and who is ignorant of Homer's merit? Hippocrates and Galen, persons whose probity was in no ways inferior to their knowledge, were of the same opinion. Alexander, Aphrodiseus, the great Alfarabus, Abubacer, Avempacius, and, among the rest, Plinius and Seneca, and many others, are not far from this sentiment.'

In the earlier portion of his 'Amphitheatre,' Vanini speaks of these two authors as follows:—

'Pomponatius and Cardan were men full of knowledge and learning. They were so little distant from my sentiments that each of them has given us a Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul. I own ingenuously I do not know as yet their sentiments upon that head, and the manner in which they have expressed themselves, for those two books have not yet come to my hands, nor have they appeared at the fairs of Frankfort, or in the shops of our Lutheran and Calvinist booksellers. After all, I do not know if they have not done as Agrippa, who has composed so many books about the evocation and conjuration of demons, although that arch-knave believed nothing of it, after the example of all those necromancers who impose on the vulgar.' The above quotation is from the 'Amphit., Dissert. 28.' In the twenty-seventh dissertation he says: 'As to me, whose name is Christian and surname Catholic, if I had not learnt it from the Church, who is the infallible mistress of truth, I should hardly believe the soul to be immortal. I do not blush to say it; on the contrary, I glory in it, for I fulfil St. Paul's precept, in captivating my understanding in obeisance to faith, which is stronger in me because it is built upon that principle: God has said it.'

It appears evident, therefore, that though Vanini had not himself seen the writings of Pomponatius and Cardan upon immortality, he was nevertheless aware that they had written upon that subject, and that, in some second or third hand manner, he had become acquainted with the general tenets of their writings.

There appears to be little doubt that at the beginning of his career Vanini was an earnest and conscientious Catholic. His scientific knowledge and general information had led him, it is true, to perceive that faith and reason were at times glaringly opposed to each other; yet, in common with many of his day, he believed there was some intrinsic merit in accepting statements as true which were utterly beyond the possibility of any verification. Indeed, in all ages is it not a somewhat notable fact that belief without any grounds for belief has been held by the devout to be an act of peculiar merit? In 1614 Vanini came to England, and when visiting London made acquaintance with one Moravi, chaplain to the Envoy of Venice. By his assiduity to the Catholic faith he drew upon him, as he tells us, the persecution of the Protestants. He was put into prison, where he remained forty-nine days, well prepared to receive the crown of martyrdom, which he wished for, he says, with all the ardour imaginable. It was not to be, however. He was released at the end of his forty-nine days' incarceration. The crown of martyrdom was to be reserved for some future occasion. He was destined, not to be the martyr of Catholicism, but of Pantheism—Pantheism, which in the mouths of his accusers was never designated otherwise than as rank blasphemy and atheism. As soon as he was liberated from prison he crossed the sea and proceeded to Genoa, where he laid himself out for the reception of scholars of all degrees. But unhappily for him his desires in this wise were frustrated by his ardent admiration for Averroes. With all his scholars he insisted upon making Averroes his text-book. Yet, as we pointed out

in a previous chapter, Averroes had been led, by his scientific knowledge, to the rejection of all revelation whatsoever. He regarded the Christian religion as false, through the pretended mystery of the Eucharist; the Jewish he called childish, through its many rites and ceremonies; and the Mahometans he styled hoggish, because of the carnal enjoyment it permitted and authorised. It was no wonder, therefore, that Vanini, with his unquestioning admiration for Averroes, should have been regarded as a dangerous and unsafe preceptor for Christian youth. He was forced, in consequence, to depart from Genoa, and retreated into France, where he took orders upon him in Guienne, although it is not known in what convent. Whatever were its name, however, there seems to be little doubt that from this convent he was disgracefully expelled upon the accusation of an act of immorality too vile to be mentioned. It was a wholly unsupported accusation,[1] having its origin solely in the statement of the Friar, and we may, therefore, be justified, we think, in regarding the whole statement as a groundless, libellous fiction, invented by a vindictive priest, through dislike and anger at the now rapidly increasing heterodox opinions of Vanini. Yet he still remained, certainly in name, and most probably at heart, a believer in Catholic Christianity. He wrote a book against the Protestants entitled 'An Apology for the Council of Trent;' and all his works, whether religious or philosophical, he submitted, as we have said, to the authority of the Holy Church.

The only works of his that have come down to us are

[1] 'The detestable Vanini,' says Mr. Bayle, 'who was burned in the year 1612, at Thoulouse, for atheism, had always been pretty regular in his morals; and whosoever would have undertaken to attack him on any other point but his doctrine would have run a great risk of being accused of calumny.' (Bayle must have erred in placing the death of Vanini as early as 1612. The most probable date is 1618 or 1619. It certainly could not have been as early as Bayle thinks, as the dates on the 'Dialogues' and 'Amphitheatre' are later than that.)

his 'Amphitheatre' and 'Dialogues,' of which we will now give a brief description.

The 'Amphitheatre's' title is, *Amphitheatrum æternæ providentiæ Divino-Magicum, Christiano-Physicum, Astrologico-Catholicum, adversus veteres Philosophos, Atheos, Epicureos, Peripapeticos, Stoicos,* &c. It was printed at Lyons, 1615, and dedicated to the Count of Castro, protector of his family and his benefactor. It was approved by four Doctors who acknowledge to have found in it nothing against the Catholic faith. He describes the design of his work in the preface :—

'I propose,' he says, 'in this work, to unfold and to make plain all the mysteries of Providence; but do not expect I should take them from the declamations used by Cicero, nor from those dreams, or rather plausible ravings, of the divine philosopher; and yet much less from the absurd impertinences of our scholastics; but I shall draw them from the source of the most hidden philosophy, as being best able to quench the thirst of curious minds.'

The 'Amphitheatre' was as cautiously and nearly as ambiguously worded as the writings of Cardan and Pomponatius. In it Vanini enters somewhat largely into the question of eternal punishments. He declares they cannot be proved from natural reason. And when Scripture is alleged as a proof he replies, 'A holy answer, which yet gives atheists no great uneasiness, they having no more faith in that holy book than I in Æsop's Fables, in old women's tales, or the superstitions of the Alcoran.' His description of the existence and nature of God is very fine :— [1]

'You ask me, what is God; but if I knew it I should be God; for no one knows what God is but God Himself. We may nevertheless know Him in some measure by His works, almost in the same measure as we know the light of the sun through a cloud which eclipses it. Behold now how

[1] 'Amphit.,' p. 10.

our hand makes bold to describe that first of all beings, although perhaps very vainly. God is to Himself His beginning and His end, though He has neither beginning nor end. He has no need either of one or the other, and yet he is the Author of both. He subsists continually, without any time; equally, not susceptible of what is past or to come. He reigns everywhere, without any place; immovable, without any situation; swift, without motion; all, without all things; within everything, without being enclosed; without everything, without being excluded. In everything, He governs all; without everything, He has created. He is good without quality; great without quantity; universal, without parts; unchangeable, though He changes all; His will is His power, and the exerting His power doth not differ from His will; simple, in Him nothing is in power, but everything in the act; He is in Himself pure; the first, the middlemost, the last act. In short, He is all, above all, beyond all, before all, and after all, and yet He remains all.'

'The world,' says Vanini in another place, 'is perhaps an animal, of which we are all members. These modifications are essential to it.' 'The knowledge of God is the Cause of all things; for that God should know anything without Himself, except He had resolved so to do, is a thing which contradicts itself; as the Cause, He knows also the effects, and consequently produces them.'

It is obvious from the above quotations that, notwithstanding his Christian professions, Vanini was in his belief closely approximating to the doctrine of Pantheism; yet there is no reason on this wise to imagine him to have been guilty of any conscious dishonesty. John Scotus Erigena was a most conscientious Christian; yet, as we have shown in a former chapter, he was at the same time a most devout Pantheist. The Christian religion and philosophy form no exception to the majority of other religions and philosophies in that they are constantly pervaded with Pantheistic

ideas and Pantheistic interpretations. Has not their most earnest exponent declared to us that it is in God 'we live and move and have our being'?

It was about this time that Vanini renounced the name of Lucilio for that of Julius Cæsar—for what reason it is not quite apparent. His enemies assert it was out of vain-glory, being under the impression that he was as great a conqueror in the realms of philosophy as Cæsar was in military tactics and generalship.[1]

In the year 1616 was published his strange 'Dialogues,' the title of which ran as follows:—*Julii Cæsaris Vanini Neapolitani Theologi, philosophi juris utriusque Doctoris, de admirandis Naturæ Reginæ Deæq; mortalium Arcanis, Libri quatuor. Lutetiæ apud Adrianum Perier. Anno* 1616. *Sub privilegio Regis.* On the other side of the titlepage was written the following approbation: 'We, the underwritten Doctors of Divinity of Paris, certify to have read these Dialogues of Julius Cæsar Vanini, a famous philosopher, and we have found nothing repugnant to the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion in them; but, on the contrary, think them well worth being printed. The 20th May, 1616. Signed, F. Edmond Corradin, Guardian of the Convent of Minimes, at Paris. F. Claude de Petit, Doctor Regent.'

The 'Dialogues' are dedicated to the Marshal of Bassompierre, and the dedication is an amusing illustration of the flowery, complimentary style much in vogue on the Continent at that day, and only in a lesser degree even at the present period:—

'What shall I say,' writes Vanini to Bassompierre in this dedication, 'of the charms of your Beauty? It is by that

[1] It is far more likely that Vanini changed his name from motives of prudence than from those of vain-glory. During his short life of thirty-three years we find him going under three or four different names. At one time in Gascony he called himself Pompeio; in Holland he was known as Julius Cæsar; in Paris, Jolio Cæsare Vanino; at Lyons he added to this the name of Taurasano; and at Toulouse he was known as Sieur Lucilio.

means you have deserved the tenderness of an infinite number of ladies, more charming than the Helens of old. It is also that same beauty which triumphs over the conceitedness of atheists, and imposes on them silence, and suppresses their impiety. For when they but contemplate the majesty and stateliness of your visage they must readily own, that even among mankind there are found some traces of Divinity.' Towards the conclusion of the dedication he becomes even more highflown in his expressions. 'If I were,' he says, 'a disciple of Plato, I should kiss and adore you as the Soul of the World.'

The whole work is divided into four parts, consisting in all of sixty dialogues. The first part contains fourteen of these, and is principally concerned with the consideration of the constitution of the sun, the stars, comets; also of fire, thunder, and lightning; the rainbow, rain, snow, and air.

The second part is composed of thirteen dialogues, and treats chiefly of the nature of the earth and of water.

The third part contains twenty-three dialogues, in which Vanini discourses upon the different passions of man, and discusses in general the generation of all animals.

The fourth consists only of ten dialogues, and is almost entirely devoted to the consideration of the various religions that have arisen in the world.

In these dialogues the Pantheistic traits of Vanini come out more strongly than in his 'Amphitheatre.' He is pervaded with the consciousness of the Oneness of God, and cannot understand whence arose the hypothesis of good and bad angels, and of secondary causes. On this wise he even combats the authority of his much-revered Pomponatius, who, in common with many of his day, held that the heavens were moved by the intervention of certain intelligences. 'If God,' argued Vanini, controverting this doctrine, 'if God is the Cause of all things, and if He is omnipotent, where is, I beseech you, the necessities of your intelligences? If His omnipotence is much more

than sufficient to have created the heavens, and adorned them with admirable ingenuity, without the interposition of any creature, why will you have it He cannot move them without their assistance?'

Further on Vanini defines Nature as a faculty of God. 'In what religion,' says Alexander (the dialogues are supposed to take place between Vanini and one other, who is designated as Alexander), 'in what religion have the ancient philosophers adored God?' 'In the Religion of Nature only,' replied Vanini, 'which Nature is itself that God, since it alone is the origin of the motion impressed in the souls of all men. All other religions, according to those ancient sages, were but illusions; not forged by any good or evil genius (for they never believed in the existence of any such beings), but by princes and magistrates, in order to curb their people; and fomented by ambitious and covetous priests, which, instead of true and real miracles, to confirm its veracity, made use of certain Scriptures, the originals of which are nowhere to be found; and of which the rewards and punishments regard but another life, fearing that the imposture would be too early discovered, should it be pretended they occur in this.'

His speculations concerning the origin of life are very interesting, and the arguments he advances for and against his own theories are somewhat curious through the undoubted resemblance they bear to the arguments one hears so frequently brought against the Evolution Theory in our own day.

'According to Diodorus Siculus,' says Vanini, 'the first man was brought forth out of the slime of the earth.' 'But if so,' observed Alexander, 'how doth it happen that in five hundred thousand years, since which the world hath formed itself (according to that atheist), how is it, I say, that there hath not been one brought forth in that manner?'

'Nevertheless,' replied Vanini, 'he is not the only one who hath taken that story for truth. Witness the opinion

of Cardanus: he believes that as the smaller animals, mice and fishes, are produced by putrefaction, it is very probable that the greater animals, and even all in general, are derived from them also.'

'A handsome method of reasoning,' replied Alexander. 'A mouse may be brought forth out of putrefaction; therefore a man may also. Are there not still sufficient heaps of filth and slime? Why, then, is there not sometimes a horse, sometimes an ox produced from it?'

'That's right,' replied Vanini; 'but Diodorus Siculus relates that there is a certain part of the Nile, where it overflows, leaving behind it, as it were, a bed of mud, from which, when heated by the sun, there are produced animals of a monstrous size.'

'That's well,' replied Alexander; 'but as for me I never could believe such a lie.'

'Others have dreamed,' remarked Vanini, 'that the first man had taken his origin from mud, putrefied by the corruption of certain monkeys, swine, and frogs; and thence, they say, proceeds the great resemblance there is betwixt our flesh and propensities with those of these creatures. Other atheists more mild have thought that none but the Ethiopians are produced from a race of monkeys, because the same degree of heat is found in both.'

'Truly,' replied Alexander, 'I wonder that those people can dispute the excellency of man above other creatures, when they behold the uprightness of his structure.'

'Well,' answered Vanini, 'atheists cry out to us continually that the first men went upon all-fours, as other beasts, and that it is by education only they have changed this custom, which nevertheless, in their old age, returns again.'

'I should be glad to see the experiment,' retorted Alexander, 'if a child just born, and brought up in a forest, should walk upon all-fours. But let us abandon these deliriums to atheists, and hold to the rules prescribed by

our faith. As for me I own flatly I believe that man was made to master and to govern brutes.'

'How!' replied Vanini. 'Dare you say that man can master a basilisk?'

'Yes,' said Alexander, 'and sometimes kills him.'

'And does not the basilisk equally sometimes kill the man?' replied Vanini. 'And where is that man that ever framed a republic for the government of basilisks, bees, swallows, or eagles? Truly, though man sometimes catch them, he is oftener himself caught by them. The crocodile knoweth well how to prey on those who drink along the Nile, securing them in the winding of his tail; and the polypus spares not the divers.'

To this Alexander judiciously answers that 'our natures are no more the same since the Fall;' and sighs in reflecting on the felicity of our first parents.

'Groan not,' said Vanini, with a shade of irony in his manner. 'Man since the Fall masters the sheep, and could, before the Fall, even the serpent.' Then, after a pause, he proceeded: 'This I will say: Oh, happy crime, that has procured us so great a Redeemer, for now we not only are masters of all creatures, but we have even the angels for our instructors. But let us leave this, I pray you, to the ancient sages of the Sorbonne; let us rather exert ourselves in philosophical matters.'

In another place Vanini discusses somewhat at length the existence of dæmons and oracles, and is greatly inclined to ridicule Socrates for his belief in them.

'There is no reason,' he says, 'to convince us that there are either good or evil geniuses, either beyond or this side of the moon; it is mere human fancy that hath invented them.'

'But,' answered Alexander, 'there are magicians and necromancers that bewitch people.'

'*Il credere è di cortesia*,' said Vanini; 'to believe that is only out of good manners. But that they perform anything

by the mediation of devils I cannot think, since I believe the existence of devils but by the persuasions of religion. But I had rather ascribe those effects to natural causes.'

'How comes it, then,' inquired Alexander, 'that the Egyptian magicians wrought so many prodigies before Pharaoh?'

'Those philosophers,' replied Vanini, 'who deny the existence of dæmons despise the Hebrew annals.'

It may be objected that it was sheer dishonesty or cowardice for an author of such passages as we have selected to profess himself to be any longer a disciple of the Catholic Church. Yet it must be remembered that throughout these dialogues Vanini is only putting forth his views hypothetically; and, through the mouth of an imaginary opponent, states fairly and clearly all the objections that can be brought against them. In the gap that lies between dogmatic Belief and dogmatic Disbelief there is a transition stage, an interval which may be defined as Doubt or Unbelief. In this stage there is a hesitation, a feeling of uncertainty as to whether the voice of Reason should be hushed or encouraged. During such a period of doubt the most natural course for an earnest, unprejudiced seeker after truth to pursue is to take a slip of paper and write on it, stating fairly and impartially all the arguments for and against his views that occur to him, and in great measure to be guided in his future conduct by the proportion of arguments falling to one side more than to the other. In Vanini's case the effect of such a proceeding was undoubtedly the increase of his doubts upon him, and not the abatement. By degrees he drops his sophistical tone and becomes more open. A new but very pregnant idea had occurred to him: Was not the God of the Holy Scriptures a weak invention, an altogether inferior Being to his God, to that which he was beginning to believe was the only real God: the God of Nature, the Soul of the entire universe? This idea took root and grew till it almost over-

powered him, and forced him on to the conviction that for the honour of the God whom he worshipped he must give utterance to his thoughts, this time without diffidence or ambiguity, and with no uncertain sound.

'If the Holy Scriptures are true,' he therefore says, 'we are forced to the conclusion that the power of the Devil is greater than that of God Himself. It was against the will of God that Adam and Eve fell, and lost all mankind; and even when the Son of God came into the world to atone for that evil the Devil animated the mind of his condemners, and Christ declares that that was his time and the Power of Darkness, and so ends His life by a most infamous death. One may likewise say, that according to those Scriptures the will of the Devil is more effectual than that of God. God wills that all men should be saved; nevertheless there are few that accomplish it. The Devil wills that all men should be damned; there are an innumerable many. Amongst the multitude of the inhabitants of the earth the Roman Catholics alone can be saved. If from these you subtract hidden heretics and Jews, atheists and blasphemers, Simonists, Adulterers, and Sodomites, all of which shall not inherit the kingdom of Heaven, scarce can you then find one in a million. In like manner, under the law of Moses, all the universe was under the power of the Devil—the Hebrews only excepted, that adored the true God, which were inhabitants of a small tract, not exceeding the extent of the island of Great Britain; yet even these also often forsook His worship; nay, when they most rigidly adhered to it, they were yet tormented by the power of this same all-powerful Devil.'

The conclusion of the dialogues is chiefly taken up with a somewhat melancholy description of the uncertainty of human life, and the transitoriness of fame and earthly glory. Alexander endeavours to comfort him with a reminder of the exceptional reputation he had already attained at his still early age. 'What have I done more

than others?' replied Vanini. 'Yet, after all, what matters it? If my soul shall perish with my body, as the atheists think, what pleasure can arise to it from fame? Perhaps with the fine names of Glory and Reputation it may be carried with less trouble to the grave. If, on the contrary, as we hope and willingly believe, my soul shall not perish, but will fly to some upper region, it will enjoy there such ravishing and agreeable pleasures, that it will esteem as nothing the splendid and illustrious pomp and glory of the world. If it descend to the flames of Purgatory, those prayers, *Dies Iræ, dies illa*, so pleasing to weak women, will be much more welcome to it than the most florid rhetoric of Tully or the most subtile arguments of Aristotle; or if (which God forbid) it should be delivered to the flames of the dark Tartarus, no comfort, no deliverance or pleasure can ever happen.'

Alexander seems convinced by these arguments of the futility of all earthly fame. 'Would to God,' he exclaims, 'that these thoughts had been inculcated in me from my earliest infancy; would that from my youth I had set out with these principles.'

'Think not on past evils,' answers Vanini, 'take no heed of future ones, and shun those present.'

Opinions such as those divulged in the Dialogues would be condemned by the faithful even in our own day. We can scarcely wonder, then, that in an intolerant age, such as the commencement of the seventeenth century, they should have been regarded with horror and aversion. Vanini was denounced and cast into prison upon suspicion of heresy. Yet upon investigation nothing could be brought home to him. Had not the whole of his works been submitted to the authority of the Sorbonne, and were not the 'Amphitheatre' and 'Dialogues' books marked with the special approval of that body? One of two conclusions must be selected, therefore: either Vanini's writings must be pronounced harmless, or the judgment of the sacred

Sorbonne must be impugned. The latter was an opinion no one dared to avow; yet, if the former were true, Vanini must be set at liberty—a consummation most at variance with the desires of his accusers. Something must be done. At the nick of time that uncertain, haphazard strumpet Fortune arose and proffered her assistance. She arrived this time in the person of one Franconi, a man of wealth and of a certain social standing. He stood forward as Vanini's accuser, pledging his word as a man of honour that the writings of Vanini were innocent compared with his conversation. 'Behold, I Franconi, I myself do herewith depose and testify, that in my presence, and within my hearing, Vanini hath spoken blasphemy, hath denied the existence of God, and openly derided the mysteries of our Holy Church.' That was enough. What mattered it that the accuser and accused stood in the ratio of but one to one? Why should it be taken into consideration that it was but one man's word pitted against that of another? Was not Franconi a man of acknowledged merit, universally respected; and was not Vanini an impecunious travelling tutor, much under suspicion of heresy? It was enough, and more than enough. Henceforth liberty for Vanini was a chimera, a thing not to be dreamt of. On the contrary, his conduct was such as to demand investigation; a trial must be prepared, a Senate must be convoked, and while it is pending incarceration must be rendered tenfold more unbearable, imprisonment tenfold more severe.

The trial is prepared at last; the Court is sitting in solemn conclave. The accuser is already in his place, awaiting gloomily the appearance of the accused. At length he enters: a young man—for he is still young, having barely attained his thirty-fourth year—of benignant aspect and kindly, thoughtful appearance. He makes his way to the place of accusation and bows respectfully to those assembled. He is offered a seat, which he accepts gratefully; for imprisonment, added to the arduous life of a student, had weakened a constitution never naturally very

strong. Then the question is solemnly asked him: What were his ideas concerning the existence of a God? He answers earnestly but calmly: 'Nature evidently demonstrates to me the Being of a God; nay, more, with our Holy Church I adore a God in Three Persons.' There is a grave silence. How could any accusation be brought home to a hypocrite such as this? After a short space the silence is broken by Vanini himself. His words had been true words, yet he knew he had been somewhat ambiguous in his selection of them; he felt that with his hearers those words must have a narrower, possibly even an altogether different interpretation than with himself. With very tender consciences a slight and trifling matter is enough to wound and produce self-reproach. In the case of Vanini a straw lying on the ground sufficed to fill him with remorse at the slight dissimulation he had practised, and forced him on to a more full disclosure of his religious opinions. He glanced again at the straw, then stooped and picked it up. Raising himself, he stood very upright, so as to be seen by all; then, stretching forth his hand with the straw in it, he spake to his accusers as follows:—

'This straw obliges me to confess there is a God. This grain, being cast into the earth, appears at first to be destroyed, and whitens; then it becomes green and shoots forth out of the earth, insensibly growing. The dew assists its springing up, and rain gives it yet a greater strength. It is furnished with ears, of which the points keep off the birds. The stalk rises and is covered with leaves; it becomes yellow and rises higher. A little later it withers until it dies. It is thrashed; and the straw being separated from the corn, this latter serves for the nourishment of men, and the former is given to animals created for man's use.'

Vanini laid down the straw, saying as he did so, 'From the fact of the existence of this straw I conclude it must have had an Author, and if God be the Author of the straw so likewise do I infer He must be the Author of all things.'

Then some one present—most probably Franconi, seeking to entrap him into some unsafe answer—suggested: 'Why should the existence of this straw lead you to infer that its Author must be God? Is not Nature in herself sufficient to account for the production of all natural objects?'

Vanini again picked up the straw, and answered: 'If Nature hath produced this grain, who hath produced that grain which preceded this? If that be also produced by Nature, let us consider its foregoer, and thus go to the very first, which must necessarily have been created, since there can be imagined no other cause for its production.'

Few other questions were asked him. His accusers had been unable to entrap him into any self-condemnatory answer. But it mattered little. The trial was but a mere superficial appearance of justice, a solemn farce and parody of investigation. His death had been predetermined. And though, as yielding them a plausible pretext, his accusers would have gladly welcomed any self-condemnatory answer into which Vanini might have been betrayed, without such pretext they would yet work their will. He was pronounced guilty, therefore, and sentenced to death by burning, in these words: 'Lucilio or Julius Cæsar Vanini, after long and patient investigation, the Senate hath found thee guilty of heresy, and blasphemy, and atheism. This, therefore, is the just sentence which it passeth upon thee. In thy shirt, with a torch in thy hand, shalt thou make honorary atonement for thy sins; after which thou shalt be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, where, thy tongue being cut out, thou shalt be burned alive.' During the pronunciation of his sentence, Vanini stood quietly and gravely awaiting its termination. When it was finished he bent his head and murmured calmly, half to himself, 'I die as a philosopher.'

Almost as soon as pronounced the sentence was carried into execution. When he arrived at the wood-pile he was commanded to put out his tongue in order to have it cut

out. He refused—most probably he wished to address the spectators assembled to see him die. Indeed, he had begun his speech by declaring to them, as he had before declared to the Senate, 'I die cheerfully as becomes a philosopher.' He was again commanded to put out his tongue; and upon a second refusal the executioner took a pair of pincers and forcibly drew it out from the roots. In spite of all his self-restraint he could not refrain from uttering a low groan. Then the wood was set on fire, and in a brief period all that remained of Lucilio Vanini were dust and ashes.

The works of Vanini are most rare and difficult of accession; and any account of his life, even a second or third hand account, is most difficult to discover. As far as I am aware, not one of our principal modern historians of philosophy devotes much space to him. Mr. Hallam dismisses him with a few words, so does Mr. Buckle. Mr. Maurice, Mr. Lewes, Dr. Draper scarcely mention him. I have therefore been at some pains to gather materials for this chapter, feeling that in so doing I may be supplying a sort of want. It is, of course, apparent, from the manner in which I have written of him, that the opinion I have formed of Vanini is by no means a low one. His writings, even when I do not altogether agree with him, appear to me to be very able; and his character, on the whole, seems conscientious and earnest. I am not sure I do not consider him morally superior to Giordano Bruno. Though not his equal in courage, he appears from what I can learn to have been more thoughtful and grave, less frivolous and fond of display than this last. Yet it is right to admit that such was not the general character assigned to him by his contemporaries, as may be seen from the translations of some extracts I have in my possession, which I herewith append. One is written by Gramond, First President of the Parliament of Thoulouse in the time of Vanini. The other is an extract from the French 'Mercury.' For myself, I confess

I am influenced very little in my opinion of Vanini by anything contained in either of these writings; they are so palpably pervaded with a spirit of malicious vindictiveness. In many parts they are not only openly at variance with Vanini's published works, but, in addition, they so flatly contradict each other, that I confess I am disposed to give but little weight to them. Yet, as they possess the undoubtedly great advantage of having been written by men who were more or less in the position of eyewitnesses, I have thought it right to append both the extracts, in order that the reader may see another and an adversary's opinion of Vanini's character, and judge for himself accordingly.

'At this time,' says Gramond, 'and by order of Parliament, was condemned to die, at Thoulouse, Lucilio Vanini, who was esteemed an arch-heretic by several, but whom I always looked upon as an atheist; for I think a man that denies the existence of God deserves the latter rather than the former title. This wretched fellow pretended to be a physician, but in reality he was no other than a deceiver of youth, who generally are imprudent and inconsiderate. He laughed at whatever was sacred or religious. He abominated the incarnation of Christ, and denied the Being of God, esteeming all things to be made by chance. He adored Nature as a fruitful mother and first cause of all beings, which was his greatest error, whence all the others were derived, and which he had the boldness stubbornly to teach in a place so holy as Thoulouse. He presently had a great number of followers, amongst those that first came from the universities, and who, being in their youthful years, were more susceptible of new opinions. Having been born in Italy, he began his studies at Rome, and applied himself with success to those particular branches, philosophy and divinity; but falling into impiety and a despising of holy things, he blemished his religious character by an infamous book entitled "Of the Secrets of Nature," in which he had the

impudence to assert that Nature was the Goddess of the Universe. Having retired into France on account of a crime of which he had been accused in Italy, he came at last to Thoulouse. There is not a town in France where the laws are framed with greater severity against heresy than in this Thoulouse; and although the Edict of Nantes hath granted to the Calvinists an open liberty of trade between them and us, nevertheless those sectaries have not dared to trust themselves in this place, which is the reason that it is the only town in all France free from this pestilential heresy. No person is admitted a citizen whose faith is the least suspected by the Holy See. Vanini hid himself for some time, until vain-glory induced him to treat some mysteries of the Holy Catholic Church problematically, and afterwards he derided them openly. The young men were at first struck with great admiration, being weak enough generally to esteem those things which have but few approvers. They valued whatever he said. They imitated and followed him. Being accused of corrupting the youth, he was cast into prison. He behaved at first as a Catholic, and feigned to be orthodox, which put back the punishment he deserved. He was even very near being set at liberty on account of the ambiguity of the proofs brought against him, when Franconi, a man of fortune and great merit, as this one circumstance sufficiently testifies, deposed that Vanini had often denied in his presence the existence of God, and scoffed at the mysteries of the Christian religion. They brought together the accused and the accuser, and this latter maintained what he had advanced. Vanini was brought before the Senate, and being seated on the stool, was asked what were his thoughts concerning the existence of God? He answered that, with the Church, he adored a God in Three Persons, and that Nature evidently demonstrated the Being of a Deity. And having perceived by chance a straw on the ground, he took it up, and stretching forth his hand with it he declared to his judges

that the straw obliged him to confess the existence of a God. He very amply proved afterwards that Nature was incapable of creating anything, whence he concluded that God was the Creator and Author of all beings. But all this he said through vanity or fear, rather than an inward conviction. Notwithstanding, as the proofs against him were convincing, he was by arrest of Parliament condemned to die, after they had passed a whole six months in preparing things for a hearing. I saw him in the dung-cart, when he was carried to execution, making sport of a friar, who was allowed him, in order to comfort and reclaim him from his obstinacy. Such a momentary assistance is of little use to a desperate man. It would be better to allow such criminals, condemned to die, a sufficient interval, to the end that they might have time to know themselves and repent, after having thrown forth all their rage and indignation. In France they at once declare sentence of death to a criminal; and amidst the horror which the dread of execution causes they carry him to it. In Spain, and all the rest of Europe, their method is much preferable. They allow criminals time sufficient to appease the horrors of death and expiate their crimes by penitence and confession. Vanini, wild and obstinate, refused the consolation of the friar accompanying him, and insulted even our Saviour in these words: "He sweated with weakness and fear in going to suffer death, but I die undaunted." This villain had no reason to say he died fearless. I beheld him entirely dejected, and making a very ill use of that philosophy he so much boasted of. Being ready to be executed, he had a most horrible and wild aspect; his mind uneasy, and testifying in all his words great anxiety, although he cried out from time to time he died a philosopher; but that he departed rather like a brute cannot be denied. Before they set fire to the wood-pile he was ordered to put his tongue out to be cut off, which he refused to do; nor could the hangman take hold-

of it but with pincers, in order to perform the execution. There was never heard a more dreadful screech than he then gave: you would have taken it for the bellowing of an ox; the rest of his body was consumed by fire and his ashes thrown into the air. Such was the end of Lucilio Vanini. That beastly scream he gave before his death is a proof of his small share of constancy. I saw him in prison; I saw him at the gallows, and likewise knew him before his being arrested. Given up to his passions, he wallowed in voluptuousness; in prison he was a Catholic; he went to execution destitute of philosophy, and at last ended his life raving mad. When living he searched very much into the secrets of Nature, and rather professed physic than divinity, though he loved the title of Divine. When they seized his goods there was found a great toad alive, shut up in a large crystal bottle full of water: upon which he was accused of witchcraft; but he answered that that animal being consumed by fire was a sure antidote against all mortal and pestilential diseases. He often went to the Sacraments during his imprisonment, and cunningly dissembled his inward sentiments; but when he found there was no hope of escape he disclosed them, and died as he had lived.'[1]

Such is the description Gramond gives of the life and death of Vanini. The extract from the 'Mercury' (which is but a short one and written with comparative moderation) runs as follows;—

'In the month of November of the last year was taken prisoner, in the town of Thoulouse, an Italian, a philosopher, very learned, who went about in families, teaching children that were desirous to understand philosophy perfectly. He maintained and taught that our bodies are without souls; and that being dead, our being is

[1] This account of Vanini's death by Gramond is said to be quoted by Brucker in his 'History of Philosophy;' but with this history I am unacquainted.

destroyed like unto brutes; that the Blessed Virgin (Oh, execrable blasphemy!) had had a carnal knowledge like as other women; and other words yet more scandalous, altogether unworthy to be related or wrote. By his eloquence he subtilly instilled his pernicious opinions into the minds of his private audience, insomuch that they began to give ear to that false doctrine. But it coming to the knowledge of the Parliament, they published a decree against this new minister; and he being apprehended and questioned, maintained his instructions were truths. Upon which he was condemned, and his sentence declared, importing that he should make an honorary amend in his shirt, a torch in his hand, and drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, where, his tongue being cut out, he should be burnt alive: all which was effected in the beginning of February, in the place called La Place du Salin. He died as freely and with as much constancy and patience as ever man died. For, coming out of the prison, he joyfully and briskly uttered these words in Italian: "Let us go and die cheerfully as a philosopher." But moreover, to show his undauntedness in dying, and the despair of his soul, when he was told to call out to God for mercy, he spake these words in the presence of a thousand spectators: "There is neither God nor Devil; for were there a God I would entreat Him to consume the Parliament with His thunder, as being altogether unjust and wicked; and were there a Devil, I would also pray to him to swallow it up in some subterraneous place. But since there is neither the one nor the other, I cannot do it."'

So run the two extracts written by men who were Vanini's own contemporaries, and who ought, therefore, to have been in a position to make their accounts trustworthy. They are so obviously contradictory, however, one with the other, as well as with the published works of Vanini, that I do not think it necessary to offer any criticism upon them.

Of Vanini we now take our leave and at the same time bring to its conclusion the first volume of this sketch. The next volume will be opened with an account of the life and philosophy of the great representative of Modern Pantheism: Baruch or Benedict Spinoza.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

00068307

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018